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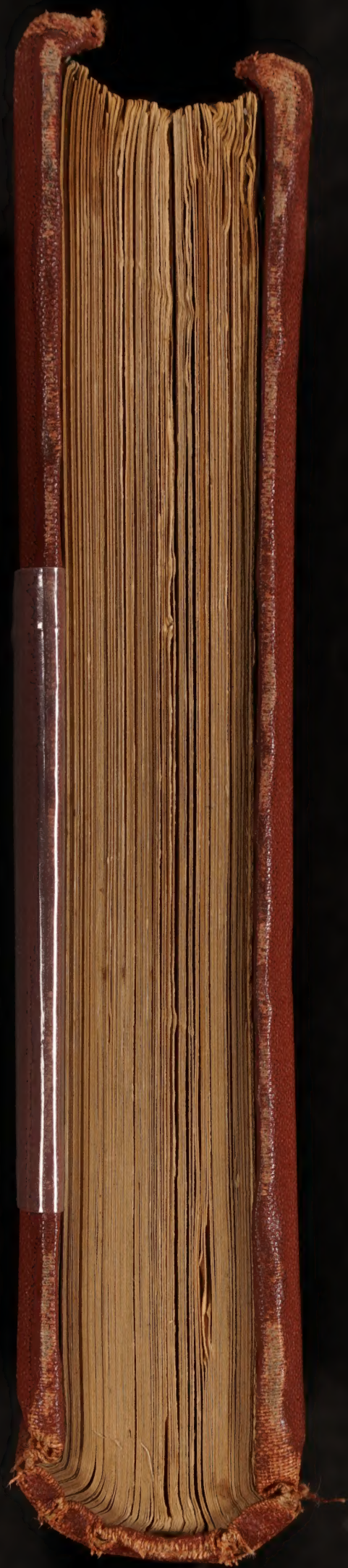
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Edited by
H. S.
Scholtess-Young

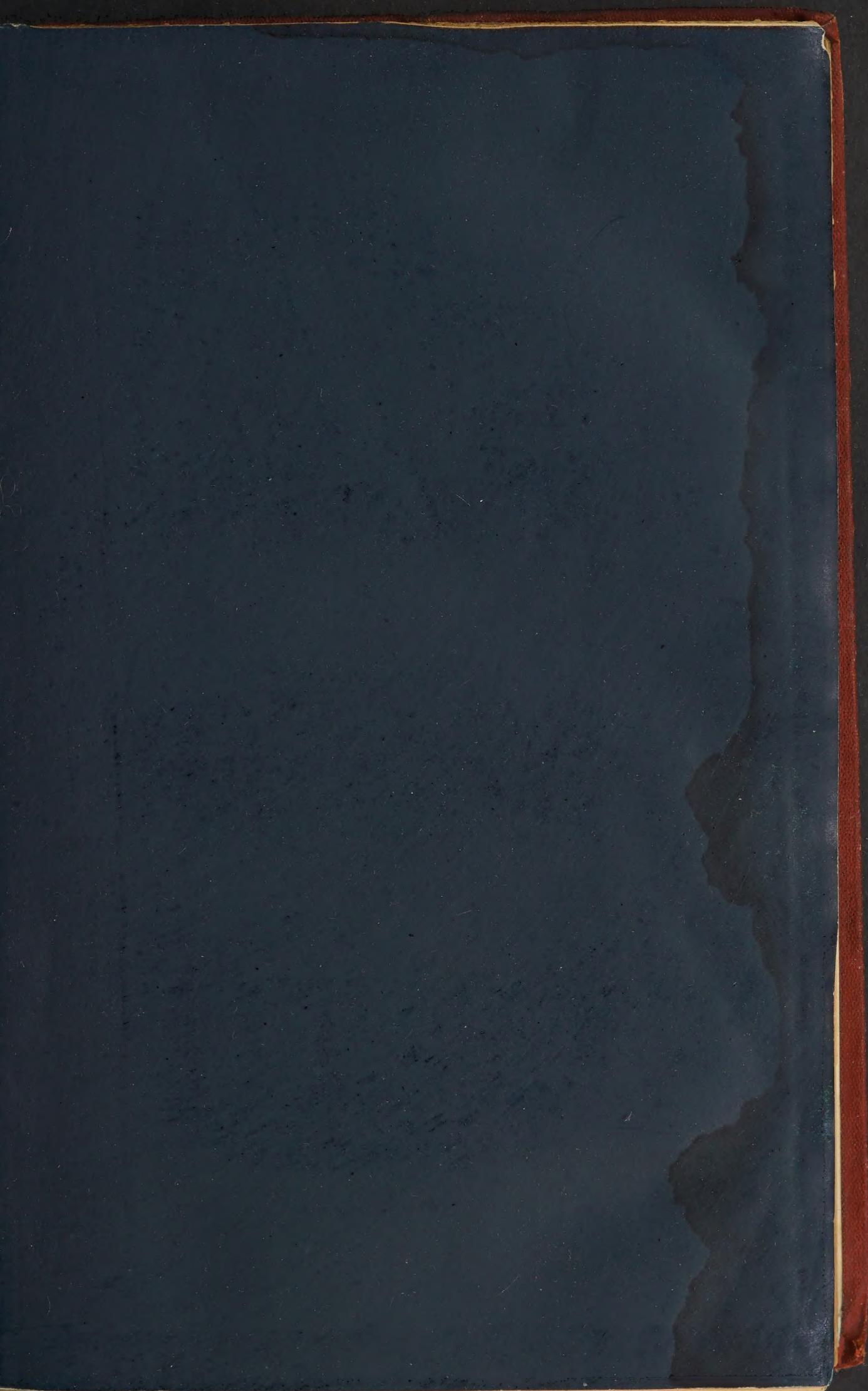
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1872

THE UNPUBLISHED LETTERS

OF

LORD BYRON

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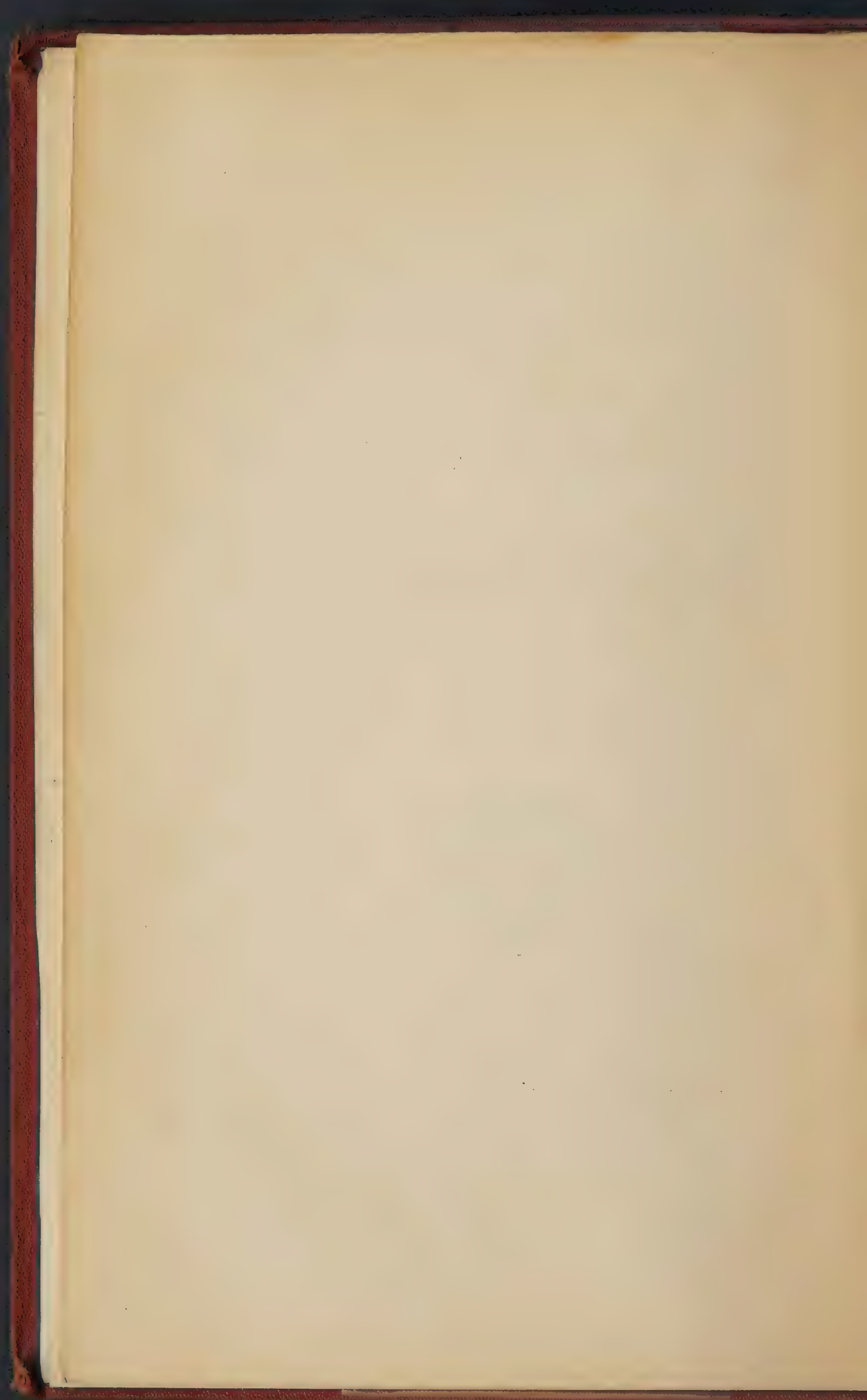
*EDITED WITH A CRITICAL ESSAY ON THE POET'S
PHILOSOPHY AND CHARACTER*

BY
H. S. SCHULTESS-YOUNG



LONDON
RICHARD BENTLEY AND SON
NEW BURLINGTON STREET
Publishers in Ordinary to Her Majesty
1872

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TO
MRS. THÉRÈSE BLACK

'THE MAID OF ATHENS'

This Volume is, by permission, publicly Inscribed

WITH

SENTIMENTS OF SYMPATHY AND RESPECT

BY HER SINCERE AND OBLIGED FRIEND

THE AUTHOR

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THE
UNPUBLISHED LETTERS
OF
LORD BYRON.

INTRODUCTION.

WHEN some two years ago, we first decided to collect the unpublished letters of Lord Byron, and present them to the world in something like their present state, we had no intention of delaying their publication so long. At length, however, we give them to the public, not doubting that they will be received with the interest they merit, and for which the present era seems especially prepared. As souvenirs of one of the greatest poets of this or any age, they would undoubtedly have commanded some attention; but as evidences of his belief, his habits, and his character, they become doubly valuable, and unquestionably important. They themselves, varying in sentiment and subject

with the physical or mental condition of their writer, reveal, it is true, Lord Byron's weakness; but at the same time they evince his strength: they perhaps say little for his religious principles, but, on the other hand, they speak volumes for his generosity, his honourable nature, his truth, his benevolence, and his filial affection. The world has seen from time to time some bold or secret darts launched out against his memory, and many unfounded conclusions drawn from his candid confessions or boyish follies; but it is hoped that the following, by withdrawing from his heart the shield of proud reserve and honourable defiance which he bore so long before the malice of his fellows, will be of more service to these literary times than the ill-advised remembrance of once well forgotten deeds.

We desire thus publicly to offer our acknowledgments¹ to the Rev. H. O. Coxe, M.A., Corpus Christi College, Oxford, Bodley's Librarian; to F. Napier Broome, Esq., of the Chapter House, St. Paul's; to W. Snow, Esq., London;

¹ Many have favoured us with personal anecdotes or recollections, &c., of Lord Byron, which we have used in this book, of whom further mention will be made. The above are those who have assisted us with the letters printed here.

to J. W. Clark, Esq., Cambridge ; to J. Irvine, Esq., the Temple, Liverpool ; and to the Librarian of the British Museum, for permission to use various autograph MSS. of Lord Byron, which have materially assisted us in our researches. And these are all they to whom we are indebted.

If in the following pages we make clear any doubtful points of the poet's philosophy or habits, we shall feel ourselves repaid for the time and labour we have bestowed upon this book. But, on the other hand, if these letters be not thought sufficiently interesting to a novelty-seeking generation, we shall still rejoice in the conviction of an endeavour after its amusement and instruction.

OXFORD : *April* 19, 1872.

LORD BYRON.

ÆSTHETICS.

THE Reader will perhaps follow us in a ramble with our author among the philosophers ; for we felt we should not be doing the subject justice if we did not, at the risk of being thought uninteresting by some, treat at length of Lord Byron's philosophic principles ; and if one think that we have lost ourselves among ' Parnassian clouds,' we beg to assure him we should be as little apparent on the plain. If we do not seem to revere enough any one particular creed, we ask forgiveness for the oversight ; while to such a critic we would say, pardon our presumption, as we forgive your ignorance. We do not write this, nor defend what have been considered the evil phases in Lord Byron's history, from any spirit of defiance ; but we know there are many who will peruse this book in prejudice, will search its pages from unworthy motives, and, disap-

pointed in their seeking, condemn the ethics that it teaches, and scorn a morality that is not founded on a creed. This is a subject of great importance, as opening up the mazes of poetical philosophy in no small degree ; since the more intelligible language of this poet is a better illustration of that science than the ungrammatical crude phantasies of some later bards.

Lord Byron scattered the gifts of his great mind with an unsparing hand ; as the sun does not count its beams before it sheds them on the earth, the poet was as little chary of the earlier and purer thoughts that lit him to the grave ; and when, by a surfeit of flattery and fame, an innate cynicism began to be developed, his natural generosity and love combined to restrain the motions of his mind. But his sympathies being rejected, his virtues uncared for, and his follies held up to both admiration and reproach, it is no wonder he lived more and more within himself, and on the solitary sea-shore mused on his bitterness and scorn. If his genius promised much, or his better works effected anything, this pyramid of pure conception soon dwindled to a pinnacle, and his brief career of virtue was forgotten in his 'crimes.' But the secret of that cynicism

was the satiety of success. Ambition was the origin of his poetry, as his poems were the parent of the fame which, while he stooped before a world to beseech, yet only called from him a sneer. To his best friends this spirit was not so manifest; to Shelley, Clare, and the Countess Guiccioli he never hesitated in his love; for such a cynic will be true, candid, nay, affectionate to his fellow as a man, though he despise him as a mortal.

We have carefully refrained from quoting any of Byron's published poems in this text because, to our mind, with few exceptions, they say very little of the inner life—the real feelings, passions, struggles of the man. Yet we do not assert that his words are not consistent with his principles—such is only the characteristic of a hypocrite, or the privilege of a God. But we imply that Lord Byron did not unveil his heart before a British public to the gratification of a little pitying applause. Some may suppose he crushed his natural inclination towards satirical and sarcastic censure of mankind merely to obtain the world's imputation of eccentric genius; but it is possible that, discovering those germs within, he nursed them in his own bosom, brought them forth in the throes of an unappreciated love, and fed them on the aggression and malice of his

fellows. Rather let us think the cynicism of his life was the result of an undefined scepticism—a belief which believed that it believed nothing, or a disbelief that knew not what it disbelieved.

If, as Plato thought, Light is the shadow of the Supreme, Lord Byron passed his life beneath that shade. Men are apt to think because the externals, the words or actions, of a poet or philosopher are vile, that his conception of virtue is as mean, and his idea of purity as evil;¹ but there is as much difference in the nature of the poet and the sentiments of the man as between the blossoms of a plant and the ground on which it grows. As the ideal virtues and principles of the divine philosopher seem to have taken root in Byron's mind, and though somewhat alloyed with the lower doctrines of Aristippus, have with the love of the Countess Guiccioli partly influenced him aright, we do not think it will be unadvisable to quote a letter by Shelley on this matter, which may be taken as Byron's very sentiments, since he had always manifested a belief in the conclusions his friend has here laid down :

¹ See page 103 of this book, or Moore's 'Byron,' *passim*.

August 12, 1812.

My dear Sir,¹—Your reasons do not convince me a human being is a member of the community, not as a limb is a member of the body, or as what is a part of a machine, intended only to contribute to some general joint result. He was created not to be merged in the whole as a drop in the ocean, or as a particle of sand on the sea-shore, and to aid only in composing a mass; he is an ultimate being, made for his own perfection or his highest end, made to maintain an individual existence, or to save others only so far as consists with his own virtue and progress. Hitherto governments have tended greatly to obscure this importance of the individual, to depress him in his own eyes, to give him the idea of an outward interest more important than the invisible soul, and an outward authority more important than his own secret conscience. Rulers have called the private man the property of the State, meaning generally by the State themselves, and thus the many have been immolated to the few, and have even believed that this was their highest destination. These views cannot be too earnestly withstood;

¹ An unpublished letter.

nothing seems to me so needful as to give to the mind the consciousness, which governments have done so much to suppress, of its own separate worth. Let the individual feel that he is placed in the community not to part with his individuality, or to become a tool. To me, the progress of society consists in nothing more than bringing out the individual, by giving him a consciousness of his own being, and in quickening him to strengthen and elevate his mind. No man, I affirm, will serve his fellow-beings so effectually, so fervently, as he who is not their slave—as he who, casting off every yoke, subjects himself to the law of duty in his own mind. For this law enjoins a disinterested or generous spirit. Individuality or moral self-subsistence is the surest fomentation of an all-comprehending love. No man so multiplies his bonds with the community as he who watches most jealously over his own perfection. There is a beautiful harmony between the good of the State and the moral freedom and dignity of the individual. Were it not so—were these interests in any case discordant, were an individual ever called to serve his country by acts debasing his own mind, he ought not to waver a moment as to the good which he should prefer. Property, life, he should joyfully surrender to

the State, but his soul he must never stain nor enslave.

Believe me ever yours,

PERCY B. SHELLEY.

But with all his admiration of Plato, we do not hesitate to say that Lord Byron was incapable of a sustained Platonic attachment. It is not our intention to discuss the possibility of pure Platonics, for there are so many consistent in nothing but their inconsistency, that Platonic reasoning would be as incomprehensible to them as Platonic love. Shelley was more suited to this love; but Byron's mobility, want of purpose, and unrestrained desires, made him at times unfitted for the society of romantic women, or the companionship of less material men. Thus, his literary partnership with Shelley and Leigh Hunt, it was self-evident, could not long exist; not from the incongruity of their natures, but through the scornful wisdom of the one and the indignant and finer feelings of the others.

Their ultimate rupture all observant minds of the time had anticipated; in proof of which we add the following extract of a letter by Mr. Evans Crowe,¹ dated from Paris, December 27, 1821:

¹ Author of 'To-day in Ireland.' Written to O. Reading, Esq., Conduit Street, London. An unpublished letter.

‘The junction of Hunt, Byron, and Shelley is amusing—’tis a moral impossibility that they can exist in the same town together three months without quarrelling. We shall have wars and rumours of wars, and at length shall see the mask of poetical sublimity torn off in some mean squabble. The enemies of Byron could not wish him worse.’

A casual observer might conclude Byron did not embrace in any degree the doctrines of Plato; such an one would imagine that a romantic and generally inconsistent passion between two persons of the opposite sex makes up the greater part of the Platonic theory. But this is an absurd and ignorant assumption. Platonism, rightly so called, is the assimilation of particles, the union of man with man; and in this philosophy there is mixed so little sentiment or love, that Plato himself would banish all poets from his ideal commonwealth. The poets of that age invented, instead of building up the virtues; they caused a craving for some higher impulses; and, leaving this desire unsatisfied, — gross, sensual, and unmanly, stained the name of poet with their shame. Let it then be understood, Lord Byron in his philosophy included many of the active and better principles of Plato’s

theory, and raised his own belief upon that high foundation.

The assimilation of particles before mentioned is inconsistent with any idea of individual life beyond, and an ignoble pride the origin of all belief in a separate existence. The most beautiful, in ideal philosophy are on a level with the most depraved, kings and commonalty become of no permanent distinction—the fool and the philosopher fraternise in death, and the Christian and the sceptic have one common glory or annihilation through the grave. Men should perceive that each exists in another ; and, since the one thing common to all is a natural knowledge of existence, the separate actions, thoughts, and inclinations of man are dependent only upon a material and perishable foundation, which can never enter into perfect union with any sensible and tangible being. This philosophy is worthy to be understood, and the solace it imparts surpasses the childish theories of any futile creed. Philosophy for the wise has ever been the order of the world, yet gods may secure contentment for the ignorant.

It is possible that these principles may be applied to the past and extended to the future ; for to conclude the theory is evidently false,

since we neither know from experience that we exist in any other body than our own, or that we have existed in anything of the past because we have no recollection of that condition, is absurd. The reader to whom we write was once a new-born child. Can he or any remember that period of his life? We suppose not; but to conclude he has not passed from infancy into the state in which he now is, is equally ridiculous. That child which he was, as far as concerns him now, is dead, and yet he lives in his present body, and enjoys his appreciable existence as though he dies in every moment and re-lives at every breath. Thus we will exist (we must believe) to an Eternity, the echo of whose name has never yet been understood.

The pseudo-philosophic sentiment of Lord Byron's latter days, mingled with the spirit of cynicism we have treated of, would never have so hardened his heart, never have stunted his pure imaginings, never have prostituted his genius, nor thwarted the higher emotions of his spirit, had he earlier fallen in with one whom he could trust, reverence, and love, and who would make her virtues and her principles his own. But neither the false philosophy of the age, nor the cold religion that supplanted

it, could move the warmer sympathies of Byron's nature, could inspire him with fair anticipations, could exchange a worthless scepticism for a worthier creed, or could raise him to that height to which he once aspired. That it was so is a disgrace upon the religion that the times had adopted, the civilisation which they had perverted, and the Creator whom they had created.

It was no wonder that he turned from a lukewarm religion and a crude philosophy to anything by which he could forget his loneliness and misery ; while women, song, wine, amused if they wearied him,—it is strange he yet clung to the shadow of virtue and the ghosts of happier years. And more than these things, there still remained in Byron's heart, untouched by follies and unscathed by crimes, a subtle yearning for some faith to fall back upon, some end to his natural inclinations. Could he have placed his spirit in immortal hands, his life had now shone forth with an increased brilliance which no boyish follies could obscure. But he could not live like thousands : thinking, if he acted according to his own sense of right, all must be well ; for he knew such is only a dream in a fool's paradise, and that it is blindness to imagine, when we have fulfilled our own standard of

morality, we have satisfied a higher. If he believed it was reliable as a guide, did he ever follow in its steps without a single slip? He knew that he did not, and standing condemned at his own bar, his most earnest aspirations and sincerest vows failed to satisfy his mind; his purest emotions mingled with the dust, and all his better feelings thrown out upon the world, returned into the refuge of his bosom without one olive leaf in token of some rest. Yet the nobler life upon whose threshold he was standing could have satisfied the restless cravings, the hidden spirit which inspired him; for while feelings vary and experiences change, the immutable faithfulness of that Divine Philosophy can never fail.

Now there are some who in youth adopting many philosophic theories, gradually steal away from them, and only remember the latest fancy they perceive; but Lord Byron, fixing his theories too entirely on his mind, lost none of them by gathering up another; and in a little time such a heavy weight of contradiction oppressed him, as would have driven a feebler mind into madness or the grave. Believing finally the soul, like matter, was transmissible, and combining an acquired atheism with instinctive philosophy, he hoped, we will suppose, that he should hand

down his spirit to his children, and pass a precarious existence in the bodies of posterity. He may not have been burdened by some religious phantasies; but seeing in the breadth of nature one religion and in every stone a deity, his soul and body worshipped at the temple of the abstract and appreciable God. He may have thought matter was but the machine for the action, or a casket for the reception of the soul; thus: 'Why,' he might have asked, 'cannot this stone speak, this flower feel, but because they have not the material for utterance or feeling; why cannot that sparrow swim, this fish sing, or myself fly, but only because there is lacking tongue, fins, or feathers?' In the whole system of the universe there is nothing individually so entire that the universal soul can employ all its known impulses upon; but if we can imagine any creature made up of all the material organs, which for a right balance of nature are now dispersed and varied among many, we may perceive in him how the spirit can thus act as equally in all.

It has been submitted that a voluntary motion is the evidence of soul; but five men may respectively be deprived of the senses of hearing, tasting, smelling, seeing, and feeling, or, if asleep, one man shall be insensible to all of them.

What! does the soul return with consciousness, or does its existence depend upon the condition of the body? We think not; but since all must allow that a soul can be in what is conscious of no senses, it then may certainly exist in the inanimate creation. If it be said that, though the whole five senses may be dormant, yet because they have been once employed the body still contains a soul—a soul may therefore lie suspended in the dead, because the dead were once alive. Or if it be asserted that a soul is proved to have existed when these organs presently resume (that is, *begin* as far as we are concerned) their proper functions, a soul must have a pre-existence in an unborn child. This theory, if not compatible with religion, is at least consistent with truth, which Lord Byron always aspired to in its uncivilised and natural form. But though philosophy is built up with truth, and founded on genius and wisdom, he could not wholly appreciate its keener theories and perfect though illimitable desires. So the consequence is apparent that if Byron's nature inclined to a Platonic and subtle philosophy, his heart, as we have already noticed, still turned toward the belief of some particular religion; but, constrained by reason and sobriety, his mind rejected the

kind illusion to hold fast the contemplation of the *origin* of tutelary gods. It has been superficially observed that we say a Divine Spirit wills and acts in one, and also wills and acts the contrary in another; for by this ignorant conclusion the question is omitted of those organs that, as we have said, are not applied to all—through which the spirit acts or wills alike, as the sun's rays fall equally on everything, which, rejecting or absorbing them, appears in the particular colour for which it was at first or artificially prepared. But the faith for which Byron sighed was not a contradictory or finite creed. It embraced all love, all virtue, all hope of immortality; it rather pitied the conclusions than scorned the pretensions of the bigot, and saw something better in the Being of Man than that he is a tool in a tyrant's hands, or the plaything of an implacable Omnipotent. But that a human being is perilously placed in a world full of the evidences of a self or separate creation; that it should be permitted for ages that the majority of mankind be ignorant of the true idea of an individual Creator; and while imbuing men with an artificial refinement—which is incapable to spiritualise, though it enervate, the mind—to lay another law but that of nature soberly before him, as if it were the dictum of a

tutelary deity, merely to support a civilisation which is necessarily immoral; to build a religion upon that foundation, to invent a future reward for what is only advantageous to a present and temporary refinement, and to hold up a legendary Devil, who is still the terror of our nurseries, as a needful and eager executioner, was something too crude in its absurdity to rest for a moment on a poet's mind.

Surely there is something consistent in the spectacle of a man who, born in sin, lives among sorrow, dies without hope, probably is damned, and possibly is buried; and this Lord Byron was continually taught by those stern divines whose doctrines gleamed so dull before the boundless light of reason and philosophy. It is true they told him of a happier state and better *world*; but, alas! only the idea of a continued materialism was deductive from this creed, and no other hope apparent of an attainable reward, except the pleasing theory of a regenerated universe. But, breaking through these earthly mists, and leaving them behind, his soul soared to a higher and spiritual life, which the materialism of the lower nature had deadened and restrained.

An Epicurean¹ philosophy has been so long

¹ We use this word in its accepted, though perverted, sense.

accepted as characteristic of the poet, that volumes might be written to disprove it without removing the vulgar belief; but we dissent from the received interpretation of his τὸ καλόν; we look to principles which guided, rather than to transient impulses which hindered, his emotions; and feel, if he did consider pleasure as the greatest good, that that enjoyment consisted chiefly in benevolent desires and generous aspirations. But the treatment of any special examples of his kind and honourable feelings must rather be referred to our remarks upon his character, while to analyse the abstract principles which prompted them is more consistent with the nature of this essay. Pleasure then in its most ethereal form was Lord Byron's quest. Courage, love, constancy, and pride were in turn or collectively a source of gratification to his intellect or heart.

Yet from these attributes, which call for the approbation of all, we must take away any suspicion of a capability for sympathising with his fellow-creatures. Kind he could be, and benevolent, generous and noble, chivalrous and sincere, but in his composition there was little to assimilate with the grosser characteristics of man. Had he been like Shelley, almost ethereal in himself, or like Keats, chiefly material

in his nature, he might have been capable of passing into the spirit of one such or perceiving the animated sensuality of the other. The blending of a superior soul with more than a proportionate amount of matter, prevented him from entering into full and purest union with any whom he might esteem. In after life we are not sensible, we imagine, of the union of the spirit within, with that which has for years been isolated by the body; as when we touch the forehead with a finger we cannot distinguish a separate sensation in the finger from the forehead; but at the point of contact there is one feeling and one mutual connection.

Nor is the soul in motion, though it gives motion; nor is it in one thing more especially than in another, though it evinces itself disproportionately. A bishop has been, for the sake of argument, a fool or a sceptic, but it is not his natural spirit which prompts him to reject folly and embrace theology. Circumstances may lead to the change, or they may not; but in either case the spirit is the same as that which influenced him before.

This spirit is not peculiar to one only, but divisible; for if we cut off any member of a man, we cannot suppose, according to the many, that we deprive him of the soul wholly;

and since it is not admitted that the soul is divisible, but individual, we thereby do not take away any portion of the soul. But a man may live to an indefinite time without a leg or an arm. He may live indeed for some moments of time without internals, heart, or head. Is it therefore in the members of the body that the soul exists? If we cut off the head, the body cannot think after; if we take away the heart, the body will equally perish.

If we assert that the earth must have had a commencement, we err; for, as we know that the ocean depends for existence upon the rain, and also that the rain depends upon the ocean, so by parity of reasoning the world doubtless emanated from some other, which is formed by some other, which again this world created. Thus A is derived from C, B from A, and C from B. And the universe, making in effect an endless chain or circle, limits the *idea* of any existence beyond.

The world is supposed to have an imparted motion. It has been said indeed that, if it were possible to make a figure in all respects like the body of man, it could not live without the breath of life. But if the wheels of a watch be ever so well fashioned, until applied in an especial manner to each other and the works,

they cannot move; nor can the body live unless it be in vital good condition, and all its important parts in harmony with each other. This is the breath of life, and with this adaptation of part to part, the body does exist and manifests a soul.

Notwithstanding the partial influence materialism had on Byron's intellect, we cannot trace any belief in the sensual theory of the resurrection of the body—a theory as inconsistent in its premisses as conclusions, and which provides no argument for such a case as this:—A cannibal having eaten his neighbour is nourished by his flesh, which becomes, though changed and divided, a part of him. Now at the resurrection of these both it is evident that, if the victorious savage be raised in entirety, the second must appear in judgment without the whole of his body, which has in part entered into the composition of the other; or the first shall be devoid of that part of his which he borrowed in the eating of the body of the second. We find no explanation of the dilemma, if indeed it has occurred to any *Pharisee* before; but the faith of many will, no doubt, in this evince its customary triumph over reason and philosophy.¹

¹ It is unnecessary to detailise the argument by showing

Some think sleep is like death, and that if we temporarily die in sleep we shall sleep in death eternally. We are said to be inert in sleep ; but this by itself cannot be admitted, for the idea is grounded upon our present recollection of what the spirit (through the body) did when we were sleeping. Sometimes we know in dreams a certain consciousness, and can remember it ; at other times only partly so, and at others are scarcely aware whether we dreamed or not. Now in none of these cases is the action of the spirit different, nor does it depend for its exertion upon the body's influence, although for its own manifestation it does depend. Recollection is perhaps the spiritual agency, especially since it revives past pain or pleasure and spiritual sensations, without material support, for Happiness and Misery exist only in retrospect or anticipation, which are the idealisation of the present. And imagination, which invents or anticipates, is not dependent on the body ; though circumstances may evoke, they cannot sustain it, nor do anything but provoke its energies or direct its aim. Though the sight is bounded by earth and sky, imagination

that the grass which in churchyards is nourished by the dead is eaten by sheep, and these again by *human* beings.

can create what shall be beyond ;—it must make these creations of what can be comprehended by the senses ; it must limit its ideas to things earthly, be they never so refined ; and it must, though they should be the imagination of ether, of space, or of nothingness, confine them by some material shape. But this is not the triumph of matter over spirit, nor can it be thus proved that the latter has no existence without the former, but it manifests only the impotence of the body to comprehend the things that are not of it. When, having come to man or womanhood, one looks back upon the scenes of child-life, and pictures him or herself in these however vividly, the idea of self in such situations is invented, without which one still appears to be separate from the individuality of those days. And so one cannot but feel leaving behind another chapter in life's history, where many new and strange lessons are inscribed, and moving on from one stage in the journey—whither ? to another fresh and untried. We will not let sentiment enter into this matter, be it true or false ; but without regretting youth and innocence, one may anticipate in future days or ages a different being from that which we now have. Rightly understood, this will supersede the belief of

separate life, or the selfish hopes of eternal individuality.

Now that an ordinary reader will find great fault with this, we are very well aware. We have come to such a height of refinement in our civilisation, that present justice seems far below, and *is*, in fact, removed from abstract virtue and philosophy. No doubt Lord Byron, being at first too virtuous, became at last too vicious, and as a man can never, we think, be perfectly good till he has been as equally evil, so one cannot be completely immoral till he quite understand the maxims of morality. This Poet suffered from the misfortune of a candid and generous heart, quick and sincere sensibilities, and a love of gratitude, liberty, and truth; but if any common mortal attempt to evince these qualities he is now overwhelmed with society's deprecating pity. Is a savage naked, we clothe him; is he grateful, we civilise him; is he free, we confine him; is he affectionate, we deride him; or is he sincere, we Christianise him.

But when a genius like Byron's will not submit to the dictates of religion and its parent civilisation—in his youth we whip him, a little later, laugh at him, when he is famous, hate him, when he dies, glorify him. This is no

doubt consistent with the principles that have always animated pious and pure society ; but there is little to be learnt from it except a somewhat indistinct idea that the nature of refinement is not so universal or so heavenly as we always had supposed. So far as civilisation elevates the race of man from other beasts that perish, it is well, but giving to some a desire for ethereal refinement and another nature, it never satisfies this want, but only hides for a while the grosser inclinations of the heart. In this, refinement fails, and loses itself in a maze of antidotes, contradictions, and regrets.

This is a philosophy for which we are responsible, and which we have deduced from the reason we possess and the perishable intellect we enjoy. We do not know what unexpressed belief Lord Byron may have had which is compatible with this theory, but from the first principles of all philosophy which he with every poet held, have made the chain of those ideas which find favour with our understanding. These theories may become a comfortable but incomprehensible hope to some ; to others, for the moment, a pleasing invention ; or possibly may awake a responsive faith in some few minds. But Philosophy in the present condition of society can never give a general

solace to the heart. It is only Religion that can do this, and the purer that religion is, the stronger will that solace be.

We have briefly noted the Poet's possible philosophy, and we commence to consider his character in abstract by combining the early principles of both and some of the final motives of the latter, before we enter into its formal analysis.

Sense, says the philosopher, is like the sun which hides the heavens, but opens up the earth, for so sense obscures heavenly things and reveals earthly things.¹ Lord Byron had much of this uncommon sense, though he never lost the ideal existence, and never permitted sentiment either in poetry or life to totally eclipse it. With a distaste for puerile affectation and a disgust of parade or appearance of good feeling, he thought others would be able to perceive the virtues he himself concealed. Whether this was a refinement of conceit and ostentation, or a humility that could not make itself evident, is scarcely necessary to know.

Byron as a child was wilful, loving, and sincere; as a boy he was eager, impatient, truthful, and chivalrous. A man, he longed to

¹ Philo-Judæus. Bac. 'Apophthegms.'

separate himself from a corrupt existence, and embrace a pure and perfect philosophy, and to unite himself with the essence of the Divine. But these things were the dream of his youth, from which the world awoke him. And turning in disgust from every earthly form, he still came back and worshipped at that shrine, but as often struggled to separate himself from the world and its inhabitants. It was the first sense of helplessness to combat destiny and present ills, which embittered Lord Byron's life, yet with a spirit of self and general cynicism, tempered by absolute philosophy and natural benevolence, he will still appear as the most admirable of men. There is another side, and some who qualify their admiration for his genius, may end their charitable conclusions in such words as these:—But broken resolves and intentions unfulfilled, tears, curses, and supplications followed in his track. A despised religion, and an insulted philosophy ever haunted him. Man hated him, his friends left him, God forsook him.—Such was the end the pious had expected. Now take we then the satisfaction of musing on these things.

THE
CHARACTER OF LORD BYRON.

THE character of a poet is perhaps included in his philosophy, but there are many details deductive from it which might be overlooked or misunderstood. This philosophy relates more to the abstract and hidden being, his character has rather reference to his conduct, or to the sentiments expressed in words or actions. We must remember Byron a boy of earnest passions and social affections, with few friends at school or at home. He may be seen as brought up under the harsh rule of a jealous guardian, unsettled by the leniency or severity of a fond but injudicious mother, and with all the germs of impulses, which, if at all, ought to have been earlier restrained ; or now a boy who, young in years, still gives his love to one who was scarcely older in sentiments and knowledge. We know how that love was rejected, probably the purest

that ever touched his nature. Miss Chaworth only saw in him an ordinary, clever and kind-hearted boy, and a pleasant companion who would be ever at her side. He worshipped her as a divinity, her wish became his rule, her purity would have kept him from many sins at college and even afterwards; and when she would no more of him, still her remembrance strengthened him, for her his ambition rose, his genius grew, and made him wrestle with his fate, if it were only for her sake. He lived for her, he would have died for her, and then would hope to be with her. It is greatly to be lamented, that she did not recognise in his admiration for her beauty another motive than that of the chivalrous and brief affection of a romantic boy, for a talented and somewhat less poetic woman. We cannot blame her for not understanding Byron, but we will sympathise with him the better, and forgive his thoughtless excesses the more readily. We will not fill this paper with anecdotes of his sincere affection for his elder friend, nor with tales of his virtues and high principles, for nothing can be said but what is or has been well noticed by our reader. And if we seem to give Byron credit for more excellences than he really possessed, the Poet will not, we trust, be wronged by the recoil of a

critic's prejudices, but calmly, thoughtfully, and truthfully be judged.

The conclusions here drawn depend upon the supposition that man is born with a distinct nature, and not that each impulse is a separate and individual one, a nature which in the same person may waver again and again, and yet be consequent upon external influences or accidents. We hold fast to our original idea of the foundation of character, which may or may not result from the chances into which the child will fall from birth to maturity, or may proceed solely from material causes, or possibly from spiritual agencies, that are separate forms of corporeal matter. We are disposed to admit the latter hypothesis, but will not deny the former its important influence on the character of man. This subject is continued and explained in the Essay on Lord Byron's Philosophy, and with more detail than we will venture to use here.

There is no doubt that Miss Chaworth was as worthy of his love as that he loved her. If she had given him her affection in return, though perhaps the world would not have known the poet Byron as it knows him, yet his domestic circle would have been pure, and his life happy, in the satisfaction of an attained desire. We do not assert, but imagine this, for Byron *might*

have written 'Childe Harold,' might have become famous, might have grown tired of domestic felicity, that noble ambition of the Christian, or highest expectation of the fool, might in fact have succumbed to earthly tendencies, and might have lost his higher spirit in every dull and grovelling thing; but to the disappointment of this gentle generation he did not, and still holds through his writings the narrow space between virtue and indecency.

We may imagine him with pure ambition, and great desires of benevolence and noble deeds, thinking of his idol and the garlands which should adorn her, but fate destroyed that idol and took it from his worship, and the wreaths that he wore after were only in its remembrance, which failing, he bound his own brow with thorns and withered flowers. It is sad to think of these things, and wrong to forget them, for they are the index to much that was strange, and the excuse for much that we condemn.

There was one who, if it might have been, would have well replaced the lost image of Mary Chaworth in Lord's Byron's memory. But she was sacrificed in marriage to a man who, had he possessed one thing worthier than gold, might have been supposed her

father. To him she was married at the age of sixteen; taken from a convent, where unnatural virtues were carefully instilled and as natural vices rooted up at the expense of honour and affection, she was thrown into all luxury, and warm and happy companionship and pleasure, to which she escaped from the cold severity of her virtuous spouse. What we are about to say we assert earnestly in the face of English morality, and in the anticipation of English censure.

But we do not desire to teach by these pages anything but what is capable of raising the animal nature to a heavenly one. We may war with the new ideas of that propriety which is always variable and usually ungenerous, but we look to philosophy for our support, to nature for our precedent, and to innocence and purity for our allies. With these intentions, we contend that the attachment between Lord Byron and his friend was commendable, for virtuous, refined, and natural reasons. What restraint religion could not give she effected; what prudence was unable to impart, she began; the heart that cold virtues had made dark her beauty brightened, and the instruction a world could not commence her purity completed.

Teresa Guiccioli in no small degree inspired much that is fair in Lord Byron's poetry and actions, no doubt to the grief of the parasites and advisers, who craved for what they had not, and regretted the advantages they had, and whose only aim was to ensure a party-gain to the betrayal of nature and affection. But this is not the time and place for refuting every calumny against Lord Byron and the Countess Guiccioli. That we leave to the honourable and unprejudiced to do. It was Byron's fault to marry Miss Milbanke. It had been a greater error to have made both their lives more miserable by dwelling with her; and that either of them should not remedy as much as lay in their power an original folly, was more than inconsistent. Byron met and loved the Countess Guiccioli, a woman in every way fitted for his society; a girl combining talent, grace, dignity, and beauty, and who loved him. But these, who seemed as suited to each other as the acorn to its cup, have been for some long years held up to public disapproval, pity, and reproof—and why? Was it because not being ordinary they were sincere, and being not sensual they were loving, and while one was a poet, one was pure? Perhaps so. We throw no imputation on Lady Byron's character or

habits.¹ Her greatest sin was the vanity which prompted her to marry the poet for his person and his fame. She, who compared with him was as a snowflake to a star, wondered when too late that her lord did not appreciate the practical and satisfactory manner in which she doled out life to herself, and the equally smooth path in which she would have him walk; but Byron is now perhaps judged more aright—a tardy recompense for a life misunderstood and lied away, yet a solace to the conscience of this just generation as the temple the Athenians built to Socrates, or the monument a later age has raised to Chatterton. So when the form of the beautiful and talented Countess Guiccioli is laid within the grave, some twenty years afterwards it may be her virtues and generosity will be fully known, as we would fain now prove them were this our office. But the turf must grow very green upon the grave of any genius before we will acknowledge what we have long believed.

¹ See the thorough articles on this subject in 'Blackwood's Magazine,' Jan. 1870. We omit all reference to the diseased imaginings of Lady Byron's later years, which have, with Transatlantic aid, been ushered into life and totally destroyed; but now that Lady Byron is dead, and the Calumniator refuted, it is hoped they will be forgotten, and their author rest in Peace.

There is something that should rather call for grief than anger, at the sight of a poet prostituting his genius to the satisfaction of revenge. We will say nothing about his further intentions, a fellow-feeling may prevent that, and of those who regard our Poet as a companion and a friend, we need not ask forgiveness for any chance endorsements of his sentiments and creed.

It was Lord Byron's ambition to appear to the world worse than he in reality was, following perhaps the example of the pious at the play of Ober Ammergau, wherein the most trustworthy man of the district shines forth as the traitor Iscariot, and the chastest maiden of the village appears as a repentant Magdalene. But in the consideration of our author, the opinions expressed in the accompanying letters, with the religious and political sentiments which he always evaded, are now modified and explained. No doubt he had professed indifference to such, and perhaps embraced that philosophy which is at times compatible with decency, but a distinct yearning for better (because novel) things is here. That he was generous has been asserted—these letters testify to it—and that Lord Byron was in all things honourably true, we suppose his most inveterate enemy would not deny. But more

than this, his filial affection so long disputed is here made manifest, while it is evinced how he, like many, cherished the remembrance of chastity, which, though he did not attain to, yet promoted and desired, as the more vicious men become, the more they admire and encourage virtue in others. We do not defend Lord Byron's morality, nor Plato's religion, nor that of Socrates, but we will observe that no one can be thoroughly virtuous until he has been as thoroughly *depraved*. This remark may be open to the doubts of many. We merely bring it forward to illustrate the theory (for it is only a theory, and we hope a mistaken one), that Lord Byron, had he lived longer, would have forsaken good poetry for better prose, and passed his remaining days in a madhouse or a monastery.

With an intense appreciation of the beautiful, which is always the mark of a spiritual and poetic mind, Lord Byron was daily thrown into the society of the most fascinating women of his time. Had he possessed the ethereal virtue of Shelley, it is probable that his amours with these fair admirers would not have taken so material a shape. But his nature though spiritual was as sensual; his polemics were less decisive in heavenly than in human increase, and his Plato but stood on the threshold of

posterity. Had it been possible to restrain his impulses, and bend a powerful mind to a nobler purpose, the world would even yet have been universal in his praise ; but such regrets are useless, and while imagination shrinks at the thought of an imprisoned Byron, we may remember he has told us the prisoned eagle will not pair, and a fettered genius be never but a gnarled and stunted growth.¹ His relative and guardian, Lord Carlisle, no doubt was anxious that his ward might not be allowed a perfect liberty until he should use it to his noble kinsman's satisfaction ; and perhaps had Lord Byron been safely shut up like a hermit in his grotto, 'with one fair spirit for his minister,'² the effects of that pious and pleasing imprisonment had been experienced to even these unbridled days. But the genius of this age driven from the fields of poetry or Hippocrene's pure fountain, by the sneer of a practical, or the whinings of a bastard philosophy, has taken refuge among the clouds of Mount Olympus, if indeed those mists have not descended to its foot ; while their baser imitators seek to hide a babbling shallowness by

¹ Was not Scott fettered when he wrote for his creditors, and did he not perish in the attempt ? And what were those histories compared with the fictions that liberty inspired ?

² 'Childe Harold,' Canto v. Stanza 177.

the obscurity or *foulness* of their streams: Byron was ever clear; he wrote 'as with sunbeams,' and if an owl, he always hooted in the day.¹

In his conduct to his mother Byron had nothing to reproach himself with, but was ever the same dutiful son and affectionate boy that longed in vain for a kindred spirit in his mother's home. His early training was so defective that such a vigorous scion as he soon grew strong and bold, but in no *civilised*, no ordinary growth. If the reader will observe the consideration shown in his letters to her who should have been his guide and mentor to virtue and religion, he cannot but be impressed with the belief that there must be something sterling in a character that could evince such pure affection. And his grief at her loss, his inconsolable anguish and final sense of loneliness, while they raise him in our esteem, must call for that pity which is inseparable from love. We do not suppose that Lord Byron's 'vices' will be tolerated for the sake of a natural affection; but we assert that, considering all things, if he fall below our standard of morality in some, he soars above the level of

¹ 'The night—(I sing by night—sometimes an owl,
And now and then a nightingale)—was dim.'

'Don Juan,' Canto xv. Stanza 97.

our expectations in others. In his life Lord Byron was famous, in his death he is more so ; he at least was an exception to the rule, that a man cannot be called inspired till he has expired, and a poet's genius be never known till his body is in the grave.

In the following letters may be seen the germs of a great and impetuous mind. Among much that is trivial and unworthy is many a brilliant thought or happy expression. His wit was never forced, his language pure—we speak as critics and grammarians—and the ease and elegance of his writings only emulate the vivid energy of his scenes. It will be interesting to note what a great contemporary poet thought of Byron's lighter efforts.

(The following was written by Scott to Dr. Meyrick, Sloane Street, London, circ. 1824 :)

‘Byron occasionally said what are called good things ; but never hunted for them, they came naturally and easily, and mixed with the comic or serious as it happened. A professed wit is of all earthly companions the most intolerable. He is like a schoolboy with his pockets stuffed with crackers. Adieu.

‘Ever yours truly,

‘WALTER SCOTT.’¹

¹ An unpublished letter.

Besides a strong sense of the ridiculous which haunted him through life and is especially manifest in 'Beppo' and 'Don Juan,' Byron possessed in no small degree a keen appreciation of a high and broader sphere of genius. He, like Shelley, seems to have penetrated through the mists of space, to have seen and comprehended the trivial things of earth, as well as the mysteries of the unknown, from time to time to have peered into eternity, and have grasped what lay between. But his soul was burdened with gross and sensual impulses, his mind had never been led out of the common grooves of daily life, and the purity of his genius has been stained with low and *ordinary* crimes. We suppose no one has forgotten, who feels the slightest interest in Lord Byron's career, the heart-felt verses that he wrote upon attaining his thirty-sixth birthday: when there was nothing to look back upon of real worth, nothing to look forward to of happy anticipation. But one feels always a clinging to the skirts of a departing year, as though loth to leave it, even though its course has brought but little joy and much of sorrow. Are we asked why? Is it a vague consciousness of wasted opportunities and responsibilities unmet? Partly, we think; mistakes one would

fain set right, failures bitterly regretted, omissions and commissions innumerable, that lie hidden away in the far chambers of memory—almost forgotten perhaps, yet making together a dull weight of pain and undefined desire, while the soul, stung by retrospect into more vigorous action, seems stretching out imploring hands to the dying year, to whom its debts are so deep, its remembrance so sad, its hopes so futile, and itself still vainly seeking for one more opportunity. Lord Byron had never felt the indelbleness of human words and actions. His remorse, for remorse came, and a happier spirit followed, could never, though linked with eternity, undo what he had done, nor seas of tears, nor centuries of holiness, ever make the ‘has been’ ‘not been,’ or blot out a single crime.

How, it may be asked, could he attend to anything, or enjoy anything, when he thought how should he feel when the last of his years had run out, the one hope gone, and instead of the closing of a twelvemonth’s account, to look back on the winding up of life’s arrears? So that if he felt so intensely these vain regrets and remorse for one wasted year, what would it be when no more years lie before him, in which to carry out these better resolu-

tions born of contrition when life is over—the page turned—the tale told out, and all that he (or *we*) have done, shut up for ever?

Now if the above thoughts, which are merely deductive, and not in our philosophy, were ever Byron's, and it is not improbable they were, how little reason appears for the coldness with which his name is even now received in some virtuous quarters. We do not sneer at virtue, far be it from us; yet we cannot but think a quiet, dull, matter-of-fact existence is less exalted than a strong, hard, *lost* fight it may be, with the Evil. Negative virtues may become Positive vices, and a complacent belief in a stationary holiness is neither the mark of a practical nor philosophic mind. Lord Byron's virtues were his own—give him, then, all credit for them; his faults were those of education, of companionship, of disposition, of impulse, never of premeditated villany; and his impetuosity was that greatest crime in the eyes of a sober and slow generation, who rejoiced at their rival's seeming fall. Even now how many gloat upon his misery, his unhappy and dissipated youth—how many hold him up as a salutary and blessed warning to their sons, how few sorrow for his faults and rejoice with his repentance! The remorse that overcame him in his

calmer moments was not of short endurance, it kept his heart and memory green, and stayed the hardening process that a life among falsehood, flattery, licentiousness, and fame induced. If some kind hand had guided him aright, and shown to him the promises which virtue can fulfil, he had never fallen into those depths of recklessness and despair. Purity would have followed as light follows the sun, the consequence not the cause, the end not the beginning, of his wisdom, having no more effect in composing his character than the perfume in producing the rose, or the light the sun. And so he perished for a time in the estimation of the good, but was never hidden from the admiration of the wise. His vices then how eagerly sought after, his virtues how uncared for, as if they were indeed too conspicuous to be apparent, and when discovered how scarcely appreciated, and barely looked into. But man, who is the growth of ages, cannot be understood in a tick of time, and he who would comprehend the soul of the meanest must look back into the past and contemplate the present before he dare attempt to say, 'We have known him; he is thus—.'

Yet the fault of Byron's genius was that it centred in himself; for while being thus

'self-centred' no man can have the highest impulses, he cannot be a real benefactor to his species, he can have no love of freedom for the loosing of his kind, and his motives can never be separated from self-confidence or esteem. How can this be otherwise when he has lost his true centre—the ideal essence of Being, whom men may create to suit their particular and private tastes or theories, and then bow down and worship that which is in reality a concentration of their own minds. But these poor fancies have no place in the universe, and can never have but one termination—in the grave. What! love a Being whose whole character is alien to their nature, whose justice and anger are arrayed against their crimes, whose purity shrinks from their corruption, whom they place on the narrow limits of their thoughts? Impossible! They may admire his greatness and his wisdom, this no one can avoid—a sort of exalted enthusiasm will be awoke in a poetic temperament, while gazing on the beauty of his works; nay, more; such a great intellect as Byron's may feel a complacent sense of *moral approbation* when pondering on the grandeur of the Essential Soul which some call God. How could it be otherwise, since it must tend to that from whence it came?

But in Lord Byron's poems there is much that is earthly: it is hard to keep the mind free from that which is below, and raise it always from the ground—so easy to let the sensual mingle with the ethereal, and chase away the spiritual. So very easy. Material things encroach more and more upon his thoughts, till in his latest poems the exalted spirit only shines at intervals, while, like the drops that build a rainbow, the Poet's genius would sometimes fall to mingle with the earth, and leave its natural glory in the sky. With its footing on the ground, it reared its head among the clouds, but like its radiance vanished in the storm or pure unclouded sun.

Whether the nature of Byron would have craved after some chance reward as a recompense for a holy life is, we think, doubtful. He saw at least in Italy a strong belief in future bliss, in return for present woe; and in the Eastern Empire he found the same idea modified into a right for this life's sorrows, so that he concluded, whether the eternal happiness should consist in resting on the bosoms of the green-robed girls of Paradise, or in that Paradise itself, did not so much concern an inquiring and philosophic mind as the possibility of deserving everlasting joys. When he impul-

sively declared he would rather have been the author and believer of these lines :—

‘ There shall I bathe my weary soul
In seas of heavenly rest,
And not a wave of trouble roll
Across my peaceful breast : ’ ¹

than of all that he had written hitherto, he merely gave expression to the sentiments which ever inspired, nay, consumed him. For what is a poet’s aim but never to be forgotten upon earth ; and what his hope but to be everlasting in continual light ?

Some have thought that Lord Byron’s character may be discovered from his poems ; but with the exception of the ‘ Hours of Idleness,’ and the fifteenth canto of ‘ Don Juan,’ we do not think that they are reliable. Smedley says when writing concerning Lady Morgan and her works,²—‘ The faithful portraiture of the mind of a great man and of a great woman also, when sketched by themselves, is well worth all they can say about other people. It is this which gives immortality to Socrates and Plato, and compels maiden ladies to read ‘ Don Juan ’

¹ There is something so quiet and enviable in these words that by themselves they should elevate the writer into a very high seat in the Temple of Poetic Fame.

² An unpublished letter.

in spite of their blushes' (1821). But Keats seems to imply that character may change with sentiment and habit: a theory which cannot be sustained if we acknowledge that though early feelings, scenes, or recollections may be forgotten, they never die, and imperceptibly influence the impulses of life. Keats, whose 'Hyperion,' at least the first three pages, emulates Milton's 'Paradises,'—much praised because comprehensible, and read because exhaustive,—evinces the following belief of the influence of habits, from which we dissent so far as they are thought to affect a poet's sentiments.¹

'My dear Spencer,—We step into the world with liberal sentiments and benevolent affections, but the experimental knowledge of men contracts the former and relaxes the latter; insomuch that he must be possessed of a disposition more than ordinarily human, who does not in some degree become a misanthropist before he dies. I may go further and add, that he must have uncommon greatness of mind who with uncontracted sentiments can sail with such a corrupt crew down the current of life.

'Your affectionate friend,

'JOHN KEATS.'²

¹ *Not* character.

² Unpublished; written July 18, 1818, from Inverary.

It is possible that Lord Byron had eventually become the author of popularly virtuous maxims, and a religious cry had arisen from the echo of his modified censure of immorality, while in commencing a new career of a righteous existence, he might have found some holy experience grow with his years, his sense increase as sensibilities diminished, and his mind expand beneath the rays of a declining sun. But these are possibilities, and not facts, nor even an embodied character of a poet, though perhaps the ambition of a credulous or holy man.

The childlike and grateful belief that animated Byron's nature to various intelligible virtues was, we think, the effect of the remembrance of Miss Chaworth's sincere and unostentatious piety. But she, though talented, was not of an especially spiritual nature or deportment, and though her indifference to our author with an acknowledgment of his precocious talents stimulated his love and kept it in full growth, we doubt whether his desire of gaining her affection being attained, he could love her ideals, in addition to herself. We may understand how he worshipped even *her* shadow; but it does not follow that he could appreciate what in her eyes had no stronger existence than as a Divine and necessary, though incomprehensible, author

of all being, and whose ideality was fashioned into orthodox reality by the tenets of her creeds.

Many who read this book will agree with the Christian sentiments it manifests or implies, and wish that we perhaps had been clearer in expressing them. But in the consideration of Lord Byron's character with which we are now dealing, we do not confine ourselves to his actual revelations of facts, but attempt to deduce a possible and hidden nature which was seldom apparent, and, though at times sleeping, at no time dead. We cannot be more explicit on this point, which comprises an amount of credulity that we are not prepared to analyze, and as little disposed to accept. They were perhaps a pleasing addition to the various sentiments with which he was familiar, though we find great fault with the weak points of both a Christianity and a civilisation, which could not invent with other modern and well-intentioned mysteries, some ideal to inspire Lord Byron with holy purposes and satisfactory consolations for present ills. Since had he perceived any, his original character might have been enabled to fasten temporarily upon them, and thus once clinging to the sands of time, at length lay hold of the rock of philosophic morality and never

let go of it again. Now there were many reasons for omitting these inventions.

Byron's melancholy has been already treated of in the Countess Guiccioli's 'Recollections : ' and we approach the subject with the same reserve in which we have attempted to define or excuse his religion. If it be possible that anyone should be prejudiced by the faith which we have avowedly endeavoured to leave unmolested, and even reverence as a venerable relic of mild and charitable days when religion, in the zenith of its glory, filled each heart with holy and peaceful emotions, whose sword was the truth, and kingly bosoms its abode—if it be possible, we repeat, that anyone should imagine that religious thoughts assisted in darkening Lord Byron's occasional moments, we shall be disappointed in our reader and surprised at his conclusions. He never sought death, we believe, for it is not darkness, despair, nor the gloom of life which prompts a poet or philosopher to penetrate the unseen world or annihilating shade ; but it is the contemplation of present happiness, of fairer nature, and the hopes of a purer life beyond, by which he dares to die.

The Countess in her book (which, if we may be allowed to criticise, would, if accepted by the Catholic Church, be a precursor to the Poet's

canonization), is very earnest in impressing Lord Byron's generosity upon the public.

If the Countess wished to prove that Lord Byron's nature was noble and benevolent, we can assent thereto; but her affection for the Poet is too apparent to do him any benefit in the minds of those who know comparatively little of his sentiments. To one acquainted with his history, and judging him impartially, her book will be considered interesting and valuable from the details it contains; but it will neither, we imagine, alter the sentiments of his friends, nor the opinions of his enemies; and though read with pleasure by the former, give great cause for the latter to cavil at the truths which chiefly comprise it, from the especial virtues unnaturally deduced from his deeds. The Countess asserts, as a proof of Lord Byron's constancy, that 'All the heroes of his poems are faithful and constant.'¹ But any reader will not unnaturally exclaim, 'What, Don Juan *constant*?' Yes, answers the Marquise. 'He refuses the love of a beautiful Sultana from fidelity to the remembrance of his Haïdée.' The cause is a good one, but the shield chosen is weak. This professed love was of the lowest order, in which

¹ 'My Recollections of Lord Byron,' Bentley and Son, London. Page 263.

nature neither does demand fidelity nor philosophy expect it, or to look further, Haïdée was but the successor of Julia and the precedent of Catherine. And more than this, a philosopher will observe that the idealities of a poet may be pure, constant, and ethereal, while his life is the reverse.

In like manner we are told, 'if a guardian had neglected and failed in duties towards him, he had always behaved respectfully towards this bad guardian!'¹ And this with Byron's application of Pope's lines—

'What can ennoble knaves, or *fools*, or cowards?
Alas! not all the blood of all the Howards!'

to Lord Carlisle.² It is by these things that the Marquise de Boissy takes from the value of her book as an explanatory defence of her friend. It is to be regretted, for there was so much of honour and amiability in the Poet's nature, that these vagaries need not have been indulged in.

It may be said that the Countess does not write for general readers. But Lord Byron wrote for them, and they will read her apology for his actions. They care little, perhaps, for his character, or possibly considering it desperate altogether, will not think that the incon-

¹ Page 431.

² The italics are Lord Byron's.

sistencies which proceeded from experimental virtues or vices can be reconciled by the excuses of a partial lover, be she never so talented and sincere.

We have no doubt that Lord Byron was both as generous and benevolent, as far as the expression and practice of those sentiments gratified his heart and satisfied the impulses of his nature, as the poor woman of Biblical writers. But the history of the widow's mite is not evidence of a genuine generosity (which is alone consistently commendable), for the charitable woman gave it, knowing she could not be appreciably poorer by the gift, and might possibly obtain a happy and disproportionate reward. This, we imagine, was not the sole reason, but, when determined on, an incentive to it ; and judge that the feelings which prompted the widow to this benevolence were of the same natural impulse that stirred Lord Byron's heart to aid by gold, energy, and life, the Greeks in their distress.

If the standard of morality be taken from the customs or climate of a country (as formerly the measure of our English yard was dependent upon the royal arm, and consequently perfect member of the kingly person), it is not surprising that the manners of Lord Byron, which were repugnant to English taste, received no great

censure in a country unblessed by English virtues or English gold. The love of freedom was strong in the Grecian heart, as in every creature not self-adapted to customary laws; but it was scarcely a disinterested social desire. Filled with some new emotion at the name of Liberty, yet dreading the individual self-dependence it necessitates, as a child whom the echo of a war-drum fills with alarm, and the scrapings of a fiddle with an ecstasy, they desired the possibility of this honourable state without possessing enough energy or constancy to die for it. But Byron favoured their design, and sought in the excitement of an adopted patriotism that oblivion of his wrongs, or expiation of his vices, which neither philosophy nor penance could impart. He died in the execution of this work. Encouraged by his example or his gold, the Greeks fought on; nor, when he retired, forgot their national aim in disappointment at his loss; and Independent Greece, though then lost to all but liberty, was a greater pleasure for the contemplation of a world than Greece in chains and luxury.¹

¹ The rise and fall of Greece and its ultimate reformation, and the interest England took in its good cause, will be perhaps remembered when the British Lion is extinct like the Unicorn.

We have not yet exhausted Byron's religious principles in this treatise ; and must remark that they might have been incited by the generous feelings awoke in his heart in the contemplation of the miseries of Greece, or the destruction of her deities, since the Grecians of a later age could not retain the religion nor civilisation of their forefathers.

The benevolence and generosity natural to Byron evinced itself in various ways, of which many anecdotes have been so often given that we shall not repeat them here. The dog Boatswain, of whom Lord Byron, as should be every other master worthy of having an animal for his slave, was fond, is an example of the ideal friend which many minds desire. It is hard, we think, to drive away a faithful hound from one's door ; and a man who could hate his dog could kill his brother, if no social punishment were prepared for crime. Byron's generosity extended to society in like manner as he bestowed his affection on this dog, a condescending, kind, and changeful benevolence, that pitied the recipient of his bounty with a god-like charity and mien.

Beyond the pleasure that it gives, Poetry is in itself a noble art. Now many a country is crowned with a poet's glory and many a virtue

nourished by his words: the world has known the power of his creations, and many a fireside cheered by his generous or homely song. There have been some poets blessed in happy surroundings who yet have lived most miserable lives. Like the leaves which lie at the foot of many an old oak at this springtime, they are unstable and corrupt, while the gentle showers that refresh others only hasten their decay. Byron was not of these, for no kind influences were of his experience, and few affections lightened the beginning of his life.

We most sincerely regret that with his disposition, Lord Byron did not seek out the consolations of Religion. His poetry, as poetry of a lower order, would have been better, his life happier, and his end in peace. These are advantages which we unhesitatingly admit a religion can bestow; but, alas! every man cannot accept them, nor all minds adopt that which shall effectually take its place. Among all the false philosophies, faiths, or superstitions invented by the world the Christian religion stands pre-eminent; it alone perhaps is able to inspire the heart of man with pure and noble Love to the Unseen; and if this affection is not so manifested to his fellows whom he has seen, it no doubt is impartially registered on high. But no one is made

more virtuous, generous, or brave, by his belief, though he derive his expectation of a happier state from it. Yet there has nothing better been found to take its place, and though its laws have been abused and its maxims perverted, the ideality of religion given in the life of Christ, is that of which many a proud philosopher might boast. No one, we believe, through any Divine aid, has more strengthened or improved upon his natural virtues, than by the consideration of the life and sorrows of that God or Man; but it is not the seeking for a material creed which shall accommodate itself to all changes of civilisation which must bring religion into final oblivion and contempt. Its ideality admits of no argument, yet Paley attempted to prove the existence of a God, because the world exists by whom it must be made. But if, because the earth is, it must have been created, therefore, because God is, He must have been created; nor can it be evinced by any logical or natural proof that God, or religion, is real from the evidences of creation.

If justice and mercy are purely temporal attributes, and belong to the government of this world; they cannot be supposed a part of the Divine Nature, unless we believe that man has no freewill from the moment he is born. If it be

thus asserted, another difficulty arises, and the spectacle appears of a Pure and Loving Deity who makes man without any power in himself to except himself from eternal and dreadful punishment, it may be while with uplifted hands before his Great Creator. Let such a God be lost. A demoniacal or maniacal fiend as this Divine Being is imagined would be a subject of horror and disgust to one partaking of his ideality in the personification of Love. In Byron's nature there was not that which could perceive the solace of the Promise he had read, the pure emotions given in the writings we call holy, nor find any place or hold for his affections. 'Tell me,' he might say, 'of some one of disinterested love, of complete self-sacrifice, of sincere and undeserved affection; for having looked in vain I return to myself in despair of such a friend.' But could he find a better promise or a purer love than this, 'I love them that love me,' saith the Crucified,—

And if ye love them that love ye, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans the same?

We cannot admit, from philosophical, natural, or logical grounds, that a creed could be anything but a solace to Lord Byron's mind. Religion is for life, not for eternity; and though one longs

for a place where the soul may find a rest, or an ideal perfection which it can embrace, we cannot, however we may wish, believe that all or any faith is in its realism true, while the mercy attributed to the Divine is rejected by his children, and the teaching of his Son degraded to an argument for individual desires. Time was, in ancient days of heathendom and darkness, for one even after having waged a just war, to wash his hands in a running stream ere coming into contact with what was deemed holy ; but in these days of Christianity and enlightenment we do these things better. For, from having carried on an unjust strife, and with hands dripping with blood¹ fresh from the human sacrifices offered upon the altars and in the Temple of the God of War, a divinely-appointed King has passed with a victor's step to return thanks within the Sanctuary of the Prince of Peace.

There are many who take into their active faith the better nature they were born with, or

¹ An Oxford friend is responsible for the idea :

'Not serve his master? Here's a man who'll try it,
Would fain serve God, yet give the Devil his due.
Says grace before he doth a deed of villany,
And returns his thanks devoutly when 'tis acted.'

Old Play, Kenilworth. Chap. I.

have acquired. A life of self-denial, of benevolence, of affection, cold though it may be to all but One, has marked them out from others. They are found in all sects; they adorn all creeds; and at the first make their Deity a kind and forgiving one, who will pardon all and suffer none to perish; and if age or long-continued trouble dim their reflected God into a harsher judge, yet the remembrance of what he once was is to our purpose here. Will not such believe that this God loves to see all happy? Does not happiness depend on our own inclinations; and are the consequences of them, be what they may, more evil than their loss? What is best we learn by intuition or experience; if we act contrarily, we suffer temporally, can we suppose eternally? There is no difference in the conception, the nourishment, or the life of man from the rest of the creation. He is an animal in body, in disposition, and in substance like the beasts which he enslaves; and if, by circumstances of refinement and civilisation, he fancies himself superior to these, in what is he the better? Can he do anything better than they? Can he weave better than the worm? or shame the ant, the beaver, or the bee? Where is his majesty before the elephant? where his beauty in the

presence of a peacock? His invention! is it better than the insect's? his virtues! holier than a dog's? In what is man better than all these? In nothing; but, seeing his insignificance, he boasts himself in vain of a peculiar principle which he monopolises to raise him from the earth into an undeserved and undetermined Heaven! In vain. Man is not in abstract better than a stone, nor acts more in the sustaining of the world than it, which does its part in the state in which it is. If he live with natural desires all destroyed, in what is he purer than the beasts who do not? Can he spiritualise his body, or does he hate it?—an easy escape lies open to him, and it returns into its dust. He is not the god which is within, nor has he any portion with it while he is below; and if he who reads this page be a genius now, what will he be in a hundred years? or whither will the creations of his brain go? Pride is not greater than Death; nor can it penetrate the tomb, though it follow even there, and through ages sit in mournful glory among marble and Corruption.

The misanthropy of a great man is no less a censure on mankind than the gentler evidences of his genius are subjects for admiration. Lord Byron's hatred of the marks of mortality, if not

natural, was at least consistent with the refinement which is more or less adopted or invented by civilised and Christian nations. He would in spirit love his neighbour of ideality, or when face to face with friends, forgetting his extreme refinement and distaste to ordinary life, evince esteem, amiability, and affection while they were before him. At Harrow his love of solitude was not perhaps of the nature of disgust towards his schoolfellows, but rather an ascendant desire for communion with himself, in a meditation on all things, or a half-developed yearning for supernatural knowledge. He keenly felt the loss or neglect of friends, and never by any direct and voluntary act estranged one of his acquaintance or expectant mentors, but, as far as possible, indulged the former in their peculiar sentiments or actions; and, with a certain dignity and self-dependence, permitted the latter to advise and instruct him, paying, however, little heed to their well-disposed forebodings. He was the Rochefoucault of English literature, and the 'maxims' laid down in his poems are as undoubtedly true as those of the French philosopher; but while one is revered on account of these, the other is reproached for revealing what he knows, and destroying the illusions or deceptions of English

life. England greatly desired to patronise Lord Byron, and was aggrieved at his cold reception of her advances. As the plaything which the British public expected him to be for their unoccupied moments, or the child whom they could caress or chastise, he would no doubt have been most acceptable to the age which he despised. To resent the reproach of Englishmen was in itself most blamable, but to disdain their praise was an unpardonable offence, which called for years of expiation to atone, and will not be blotted out till the living individuals of those times are forgotten.

We defend, it is true, Lord Byron's misanthropy; but we find no fault with his social indulgences, for they were as necessary to him as to all men. He lived in society, and, in some degree at least, he must have bowed to it, and adopted its outward customs and morality, though he forsook or never held the virtuous principles which inspired them. Continental society pardoned him, for his apparent sins against itself, and English refinement would have been as kind had he remained on English soil.

If many of the best or worst of men could write an analysis of their own characters, they would reproduce Lord Byron's. Could their temptations, their griefs, their virtues, their

generosity, be as well known as their religion or their sins, they would still be like Lord Byron's. If he shunned men he shunned their vices, and if he betook himself to solitude he carried inspiration with him, and shut himself up with the Unseen. His 'crimes' were stimulated by the example of his acquaintance; his virtues were never stirred by the hypocrisy of the world. If he were what he has been painted—a bad husband, a libertine, or a sceptic¹—in what are his censors now the better? and were their sentiments never mingled with desired or acted crimes?

We cannot reflect upon his temporary misanthropy without associating Lady Byron's name with it. If Lord Byron were at any moment of his life insane, it was surely when he wrote 'Will you?' to Miss Milbanke; if at any time that lady played the part of a selfish and conceited woman, it was when she consented. Were Lord Byron's faults unknown to her? He did not hide them, and England was not silent; and we are not told, nor has any writer since her death informed us by honourable or dishonourable means, that she strove in sincere or judicious ways to restrain her hus-

¹ To philosophy.

band's words and actions within the limit of English morality.

Some have found great fault with Byron in his subsequent unfaithfulness to his reluctant spouse. If there be one whose virtues are within as well as apparent, whose zeal is sincere, and whose charity divine, let him then judge Byron by the nature that he had, or the goodness he acquired.

There is a state of madness which some may hold as did Lord Byron. But it was the madness of others; for a soul that yearns for what is not earthly, that despises the trammels of the world and neglects the maxims of society, is by some called mad. Lady Byron not seeing in what she thought eccentricities, (and which had she indulged in would have been indeed a proof of madness,) another nature to her own, insulted the feelings of the poet, and outraged the temper of the husband by her suspicions and her reproaches. And when separated, the world which took up her cause, that it might be the stronger, invented the inconsistency that Lord Byron wished again to be united to a wife who was unfitted for his society and life. If a few sentiments of regret and awakened lingering for what was out of his reach, and, because unattainable, desired, at all

animated him, they passed away in the presence of nature, and were forgotten when clear skies hung over him and kind faces were around to promise happiness and hope. He thought often of England and his home, but their contemplation prompted alone the harsh and misanthropical portions of his poems. England, where virtues reign so openly, reproached him for private vices committed at home and abroad, and never rested till he was far away over sea and Alps, and insensible to her censure or her praise. And England's morality is so pure compared with nature's God !

The vanity of a poet is perhaps excusable even in England, if it be not too apparent. Everyone is proud of some quality he possesses, or vain of many which he does not, whether it be of beauty, of genius, of rank, of religion,¹ or humility; and Byron, we think, was no exception, in this respect, to others. In the Marquise de Boissy's volume is a chapter on Lord Byron's vanity, which commences thus : ' But it is incomprehensible that anyone should have been found to accuse Lord Byron of vanity ! ' Such exquisite *naïveté* is characteristic of the book,

¹ One is perhaps even proud of his religion as a child is of the castles which it builds upon the shore in defiance of the tide.

but should perhaps be a little more suited to its subject, and might well evoke a smile from the poet in his grave. There was nothing dishonourable in his vanity, his pride, or his temporary misanthropy; it is enough, we think, to pourtray Byron as a perfect man; it is unnatural to picture him a perfect angel or a divine animal, whose virtues shine forth in undoubted italics through every page of a book learned, clever, and sincere. The chapter¹ on 'His Faults' alone would be considered a gross flattery were it repeated of any living man, but as an epitaph it may stand to the honour of the poet or the sincerity of his friend.

It is not our intention to bring forward extracts from Lord Byron's poems, in which his character may be supposed revealed; but in the drama of 'Manfred' occurs a passage of such condensed and philosophic meaning, that we will insert it here.

Said the Abbot :

'This should have been a noble creature, he
Hath all the energy which would have made
A goodly frame of glorious elements,
Had they been wisely mingled ; as it is
It is an awful chaos—light and darkness,

¹ 'Recollections of Lord Byron,' chap. xvi.

And mind and dross, and passions and pure
thoughts
Mixed, and contending without end or order.'

Byron loved nature, and he followed her into sin. The analysation of her parts did not attract him, which, joined with experience, may emulate the utility of a Noah's ark in teaching a young generation the nomenclature of the animal kingdom, but an instinctive union with what was beautiful and innocently pure, filled his mind and heart with gratitude and love. The clouds and vault of song may have seemed to him the shield of Heaven, through which he would aspire to where his soul might go, but the earth was his delight to reverence and admire, and with this natural affection for the uncivilised and simple world he passed his life.

He had a love of the beautiful, an appreciation of the ridiculous, a quick conception of what is generally considered right and wrong, and an equal balance of the faculties, and perhaps these led him into vices. We will but briefly notice the faults of Lord Byron since they were external to his real nature. If we did so we might with justice express our disapprobation in some such words as these : It is with regret

we contemplate the poet's condition, though he was at least sensible to the darts of satire and the refinement of involuntary praise; but an attempt to make permanent his virtues, or perpetuate his zeal, is by the ill-advised impetuosity of his friends but the commemoration of folly. Be it far from us to assert that the qualities of his heart were not the conception of his mind. His friends had not inspired them, with whom we war not; for the inspiration of virtue is not possible from quarters where it does not or rarely exist, and to a heart where it can find no home. His character, conceived in immorality, fashioned in cruelty, nourished by ambition, and supported by inconstancy, is now before the world in the light of reason and Christianity, which, quickening earth, walk hand in hand to Heaven. Such are the reproaches we might heap on Lord Byron's memory were we to contemplate his faults alone.

But these were not of Byron. It has been well said, in him were the seeds of many virtues but the harvest of many vices;¹ yet these crimes did not permeate his whole character, destroy the noble sentiments that were hidden, nor affect the generosity of his nature. Misanthropy, vanity, irritability, or inconstancy, in a greater

¹ 'Saturday Review.'

or less degree sullied the many virtues which the world has at last unwillingly allowed him ; but the same kindness and benevolence which was apparent in his boyhood, the same chivalrous and home impulses of his heart, were never lost by flattery or pity, and it is on these that Lord Byron's good name depends. Society will forgive now its enemy of a bygone age ; let it reverence his genius and cherish his remembrance without envy and without reproach.

Those precepts which many reverence as a child and forget as a man never completely lost their influence on Lord Byron. The anomaly of a cultivated conscience was not perhaps conspicuous in his character, but a sincere desire for brave and noble deeds, which he inherited from his youth, is apparent in his poems and his actions. He was in some degree consistent with the virtuous heart he had, when he resisted some of the temptations which surrounded him, when he protected the feeble, relieved the widow, and helped on the cause of Liberty and Truth ; when he sacrificed his interests to his honour, when he avenged the helpless and raised the fallen ; and when he repudiated the jealousies common to his class, to be generous and benevolent to all. Let none by reason of their superior virtues deny

these things. We had never brought them forward unless they could be evidently found in well-known and acknowledged deeds.

There was some apparent inconsistency in the ease with which Lord Byron satisfied all visitors, Protestants, infidels, Catholics, or philosophers, and the air of reverence and humility he wore when within a Temple to a God. He adapted his conversation to his society, and his morals to his locality; nor do we think it therefore evident that he was hypocritical in either. The idea of Individuality has so taken root and flourished under civilised and Christian patronage, that a wide and seeming necessary gulf has been made between sect and sect, and man and man; and with this unhappy barrier between hearts and souls, a uniformity of generous belief has appeared impossible to a practical and superstitious age. But when from a pinnacle of civilisation now undreamt of, and from a refinement of religion yet uncreated, a generation now in earth looks back upon these temples, and erecting its own palaces with the dust of its forefathers, shall walk in equal pride on the ground that gave it birth; when the Wisdom of the future shall bow down to the Folly of to-day, and the knowledge of the world survey the glory of our genius, as an

idle or a curious toy, when our sepulchres, O Reader, shall be one,—and a strange garb, language, and religion greet the wanderer to his once remembered land; it may be that homes, countries, and continents shall be united under one government and God.

Lord Byron is now dust, or in dust; but we will not forget him, and all may join in the chorus of his glory. Though conclusions be drawn from his deeds as false as moonbeams on a sundial, though with a holy zeal some assail him, though philosophy sneer and return to her Shelley, and though this practical and colder age place him among the useless dreamers and the Deities, yet a world has bowed before him, and a nation which had gathered the flowers of his genius has flung them on his tomb. Though his name be not honoured, nor his works everlasting, he, whose life was solitary and hard, sleeps unmolested in the grave of his fathers, and dwells still alone in undetermined Rest.

LORD BYRON'S LETTERS.

LETTER I.

TO THE HON. MRS. BYRON.

Gibraltar : August 11, 1809.

DEAR MOTHER,—I have been so much occupied since my departure from England, that till I could address you at length I have forborne writing altogether. As I have now passed through Portugal, and a considerable part of Spain, and have leisure at this place, I shall endeavour to give you a short detail of my movements. We sailed from Falmouth on the 2nd of July, reached Lisbon after a very favourable passage of four days and a half, and took up our abode in that city. It has been often described without being worthy of description, for except the view from the Tagus, which is beautiful, and some fine churches and convents, it contains little but filthy streets, and more filthy inhabitants. To make amends for this, the village of Cintra, about fifteen miles from

the capital, is, perhaps, in every respect, the most delightful in Europe; it contains beauties of every description, natural and artificial. Palaces and gardens rising in the midst of rocks, cataracts and precipices, convents on the pendous heights, a distant view of the sea and the Tagus; and besides (though that is a secondary consideration) is the scene of Sir H. D.'s convention. It unites in itself all the wildness of the western Highlands, with the verdure of the South of France. Near this place, about ten miles to the right, is the palace of Massa, the boast of Portugal, as it might be of any country in point of magnificence without elegance. There is a convent annexed; the monks, who possess large revenues, are courteous enough, and understand Latin, so that we had a long conversation. They have a large library, and asked me if the *English* had *any books* in their country. I sent my baggage, and part of the servants, by sea to Gibraltar, and travelled on horseback from Aldea Galhega (the first stage from Lisbon, which is only accessible by water) to Seville (one of the most famous cities in Spain), where the Government called the Junta is now held. The distance to Seville is nearly four hundred miles, and to Cadiz almost ninety farther towards the coast. I had orders

from the governments, and every possible accommodation on the road, as an English nobleman, in an English uniform, is a very respectable personage in Spain at present. The horses are remarkably good, and the roads (I assure you upon my honour, for you will hardly believe it) very far superior to the best English roads, without the smallest toll or turnpike. You will suppose this when I rode post to Seville, in four days, through this parching country in the midst of summer, without fatigue or annoyance. Seville is a beautiful town; though the streets are narrow, they are clean. We lodged in the house of two Spanish unmarried ladies, who possess *six* houses in Seville, and gave me a curious specimen of Spanish manners. They are women of character, and the eldest is a fine woman, the youngest pretty, but not so good a figure as Donna Josepha. The freedom of manner, which is general here, astonished me not a little, and, in the course of further observation, I found that reserve is not the characteristic of the Spanish belles, who are in general very handsome, with large black eyes and very fine forms. The eldest honoured your *unworthy* son with very particular attention, embracing him with great tenderness at parting (I was

there but three days), after cutting off a lock of his hair, and presenting him with one of her own, about three feet in length, which I send, and beg you will retain till my return. Her last words were, 'Á Dios, tu hermoso; me gusta mucho' ('Adieu, you pretty fellow; you please me much'). She offered me a share of her apartment, which my *virtue* induced me to decline. She laughed, and said I had some English 'amante' (lover), and added that she was going to be married to an officer in the Spanish army. I left Seville, and rode on to Cadiz, through a beautiful country. At Xeres, where the sherry we drink is made, I met a great merchant—a Mr. Gordon of Scotland—who was extremely polite, and favoured me with the inspection of his vaults and cellars, so that I quaffed at the fountain head. Cadiz, sweet Cadiz, is the most delightful town I ever beheld—very different from our English cities in every respect, except cleanliness (and it is as clean as London), but still beautiful, and full of the finest women in Spain, the Cadiz belles being the Lancashire witches in their land. Just as I was introduced, and began to like the grandees, I was forced to leave it for this cursed place, but before I return to England I will visit it again. The night before I left it, I sat in the

box with Admiral Cordova's family. He is the commander whom Lord St. Vincent defeated in 1797, and has an aged wife and fine daughter, Lennorda Cordova; the girl is very pretty in the Spanish style; in my opinion, by no means inferior to the English in charms, and certainly superior in fascination—long black hair, dark languishing eyes, *clear* olive complexions, and forms more graceful in motion than can be conceived by an Englishman used to the drowsy, listless air of his countrymen, added to the most becoming dress, and the same time the most decent in the world, render a Spanish beauty irresistible. I beg leave to observe that intrigue here is the business of life; when a woman marries she throws off all restraint, but I believe their conduct is chaste enough before. If you make a proposal, which in England will bring a box on the ear from the meekest of virgins, to a Spanish girl, she thanks you for the honour you intend her, and replies, 'Wait till I am married, and I shall be too happy.' This is literally and strictly true. Miss C. and her brother understand a little French, and after regretting my ignorance of the Spanish, she proposed to become my preceptress in that language. I could only reply by a low bow, and expressed my regret that I quitted Cadiz

too soon to permit me to make the progress which would doubtless attend my studies under so charming a directress. I was standing at the back of the box, which resembles our opera boxes (the theatre is large, and finely decorated, the music admirable), in the manner which Englishmen generally adopt for fear of incommoding the ladies in front, when the fair Spaniard dispossessed an old woman (an aunt or duenna) of her chair, and commanded me to be seated next herself at a tolerable distance from her mamma. At the close of the performance I withdrew, and was lounging with a party of men in the passage, when, *en passant*, the lady turned round and called me, and I had the honour of attending her to the Admiral's mansion. I have an invitation on my return to Cadiz, which I shall accept if I repass through the country on my return from Asia. I have met Sir John Carr, knight errant, at Seville and Cadiz. He is a pleasant man. I like the Spaniards much. You have heard of the battle near Madrid, and in England they would call it a victory—a pretty victory! Two hundred officers and five thousand men killed—all English—and the French in as great force as ever. I should have joined the army, but we have no time to lose before we get up the Mediterranean and

Archipelago. I am going over to Africa to-morrow; it is only six miles from the fortress. My next stage is Cagliari in Sardinia, where I shall be presented to his majesty. I have a most superb uniform as a court dress, indispensable in travelling.

August 13.—I have not yet been to Africa—the wind is contrary—but I dined yesterday at ———,¹ where I met General Castanos, the celebrated Spanish leader in the late and present war. To-day I dine with him. He has offered me letters to Teteran in Barbary, for the principal Moors, and I am to have the horse for a few days of one of the great men, which was intended for Lady W——,² whose health will not permit her to cross the Straits.

August 15.—I could not dine with Castanos yesterday, but this afternoon I had that honour. He is pleasant and, for aught I know to the contrary, clever. I cannot go to Barbary. The Malta packet sails to-morrow, and myself in it. Admiral Purvis, with whom I dined at Cadiz, gave me a passage in a frigate to Gibraltar, but we have a ship of war destined for Malta at present. The packets sail fast, and have good accommodation. You shall hear

¹ Illegible.—ED.

² Lady Westmoreland.—ED.

from me on our route. Joe Murray delivers this ; I have sent him and the boy back. Pray show the lad kindness, as he is my great favourite ; I would have taken him on. And say this to his father, who may otherwise think he has behaved ill.

I hope this will find you well.

Ever sincerely,

BYRON.

P.S.—So Lord G—— is married to a rustic. Well done ! If I wed, I will bring home a Sultana, with half a dozen cities for a dowry, and reconcile you to an Ottoman daughter-in-law, with a bushel of pearls not larger than ostrich eggs, or smaller than walnuts.¹

LETTER II.

TO THE HON. MRS. BYRON.

Malta : September 15, 1809.

Dear Mother,—Though I have a very short time to spare, being to sail immediately for Greece, I cannot avoid taking an opportunity

¹ Extracts from this letter have been published in Moore's 'Life,' but we thought it well to give the entire letter in place of any of our own explanations of context. This will be applicable to one other letter, dated November 12, 1809.—ED.

of telling you that I am well. I have been in Malta a short time, and have found the inhabitants hospitable and pleasant. . . .

You have seen Murray and Robert by this time, and received my letter. Little has happened since that date. I have touched at Cagliari, at Sardinia, and at Giargente in Sicily, and embark to-morrow for Patras, from whence I proceed to Yanina, where Ali Pacha holds his court. So I shall soon be among the Mussulmans. Adieu.

Believe me with sincerity yours ever,

BYRON.

LETTER III.

TO THE HON. MRS. BYRON.

Previsa : November 12, 1809.

My dear Mother,—I have now been some time in Turkey. This place is on the coast, but I have traversed the interior of the province of Albania, on a visit to the Pacha. I left Malta in the ‘Spider,’ a brig of war, on the 21st of September, and arrived in eight days at Previsa. I thence have been about a hundred and fifty miles, as far as Tepaleen, his highness’s country palace, where I stayed three days. The name of the Pacha is Ali, and he is considered a man of the first abilities; he governs the whole of

Albania (the ancient Illyricum), Epirus, and part of Macedonia. His son, Velly Pacha, to whom he has given me letters, governs the Morea, and he has great influence in Egypt; in short, he is one of the most powerful men in the Ottoman Empire. When I reached Yanina, the capital—after a journey of three days over the mountains, through a country of the most picturesque beauty—I found that Ali Pacha was with his army in Illyricum, besieging Ibrahim Pacha in the Castle of Berat. He had heard that an Englishman of rank was in his dominions, and left orders in Yanina with the commandant to provide a house, and provide me with every kind of necessary, *gratis*; and, though I have been allowed to make presents to the slaves, &c., I have not been permitted to pay for a single article of household consumption. I rode out on the Vizier's horses, and saw the palaces of himself and grandsons; they are splendid, but too much ornamented with silk and gold. I then went over the mountains through Zitza, a village with a Greek monastery (where I slept on my return), in the most beautiful situation (always excepting Cintra and Portugal) I ever beheld. In nine days I reached Tepaleen; our journey was much prolonged by the torrents that had fallen from

the mountains and intersected the road. I shall never forget the singular scene on entering Tapleen at five in the afternoon, as the sun was going down; it brought to my mind (with some changed *dress*, however) Scott's description of Branksome Castle in his Lay and the feudal system. The Albanians in their dresses (the most magnificent in the world, consisting of a long *white kilt*, gold-worked cloak, crimson velvet gold-laced jacket and waistcoat, silver-mounted pistols and daggers), the Tartars with their high caps, the Turks in their vast pelisses and turbans, the soldiers and black slaves with the horses (the former are grouped in an immense large open gallery in front of the palace, the latter placed in a kind of cloister below it—two hundred steeds ready caparisoned to move in a moment), couriers entering or passing out with despatches, the kettle-drums beating, boys calling the hour from the minaret of the mosque, altogether, with the singular appearance of the building itself, formed a new and delightful spectacle to strangers. I was conducted to a very handsome apartment, and my health enquired after by the Vizier's secretary, 'à la mode turque.' The next day I was introduced to Ali Pacha. I was dressed in a full suit of staff uniform, with a very magnifi-

cent sabre, &c. The Vizier received me in a large room paved with marble; a fountain was playing in the centre; the apartment was surrounded by scarlet ottomans. He received me standing—a wonderful compliment from a Mussulman—and made me sit down on his right hand. I have a Greek interpreter for general use, but a physician of Ali's, Jemnario, who understands Latin, acted for me on this occasion; his first question was, Why, at so early an age, I left my country? (The Turks have no idea of travelling for amusement.) He then said the English minister, Captain Leake, had told him I was of a great family, and desired his respects to my mother, which I now in the name of Ali Pacha present to you. He said he was certain I was a man of birth because I had small ears, curling hair, and little white hands, and expressed himself pleased with my appearance and garb. He told me to consider him as a father whilst I was in Turkey, and said he looked on me as a son. Indeed he treated me like a child, sending me almonds and sugared sherbet, fruit and sweetmeats, twenty times a day. He begged me to visit him often, and at night, when he was at leisure. I then, after coffee and pipes, retired for the first time. I saw him thrice afterwards. It is

singular that the Turks, who have no hereditary dignities, and few great families, except the Sultan's, pay so much respect to birth, for I found my pedigree more regarded than my title. His highness is sixty years old, very fat, and not tall, but with a fine face, light blue eyes, and a white beard; his manner is very kind, and at the same time he possesses that dignity which I find universal amongst the Turks. He has the appearance of anything but his real character, for he is a remorseless tyrant, guilty of the most horrible cruelties, very brave, and so good a general that they call him the Mahometan Buonaparte. Napoleon has twice offered to make him King of Epirus, but he prefers the English interest, and abhors the French, as he himself told me. He is of so much consequence that he is much courted by both, the Albanians being the most warlike subjects of the Sultan, though Ali is only nominally dependent on the Porte; he has been a mighty warrior, but is as barbarous as he is successful, roasting rebels, &c. &c. Buonaparte sent him a snuff-box with his picture. He said the snuff-box was very well, but the picture he could excuse, as he neither liked it nor the original. His ideas of judging of a man's birth from ears, hands, &c., were

curious enough. To me he was, indeed, a father, giving me letters, guards, and every possible accommodation. Our next conversations were of war and travelling, politics and England. He called my Albanian soldier who attends me, and told him to protect me at all hazard; his name is Viscillie, and, like all the Albanians, he is brave, rigidly honest, and faithful; but they are cruel though not treacherous, and have several vices but no meanesses. They are perhaps the most beautiful race in point of countenance in the world; their women are sometimes handsome also, but they are treated like slaves, *beaten*, and, in short, complete beasts of burden; they plough, dig, and sow. I found them carrying wood, and actually repairing the highways. The men are all soldiers, and war and the chase their sole occupations. The women are the labourers, which after all is no great hardship in so delightful a climate. Yesterday, the 11th of November, I bathed in the sea; to-day is so hot that I am writing in a shady room of the English consul's, with three doors wide open, no fire, or even *fireplace*, in the house, except for culinary purposes. To-day I saw the remains of the town of Actium, near which Antony lost the world in a small bay where

two frigates could hardly manœuvre ; a broken wall is the sole remnant. On another point of the gulph stand the ruins of Nicopolis, built by Augustus in honour of his victory. Last night I was at a Greek marriage, but this and a thousand things more I have neither time nor *space* to describe. I am going to-morrow with a guard of fifty men to Patras in the Morea, and thence to Athens, where I shall winter. Two days ago I was nearly lost in a Turkish ship of war, owing to the ignorance of the captain and crew, though the storm was not violent. Fletcher yelled after his wife, the Greeks called on all the saints, the Mussulmans on Alla ; the captain burst into tears and ran below deck, telling us to call on God ; the sails were split, the mainyard shivered, the wind blowing fresh, the night setting in, and all our chance was to make Corfu, which is in possession of the French, or (as Fletcher pathetically termed it) 'a watery grave.' I did what I could to console Fletcher, but finding him incorrigible, wrapt myself up in my Albanian capote (an immense cloak), and lay down on deck to wait the worst. I have learnt to philosophise in my travels, and if I had not, complaint was useless. Luckily the wind abated, and only drove us on the coast of Suli,

on the mainland, where we landed, and proceeded, by the help of natives, to Previsa again ; but I shall not trust Turkish sailors in future, though the Pacha had ordered one of his own gallots to take me to Patras ; I am therefore going as far as Messalungli by land, and there have only to cross a small gulph to get to Patras. Fletcher's next epistle will be full of marvels. We were one night lost for nine hours in the mountains in a thunderstorm, and since nearly wrecked. In both cases Fletcher was sorely bewildered from apprehensions of famine and banditti in the first and drowning in the second instance. His eyes were a little hurt by the lightning, or crying (I don't know which), but are now recovered. When you write address to me at Mr. Stranès, English Consul, Patras, Morea.

I could tell you I know not how many incidents that I think would amuse you, but they crowd on my mind as much as they would swell my paper, and I can neither arrange them in the one or put them down in the other except in the greatest confusion.¹ I like the Albanians much ; they are not all Turks—some tribes are Christians, but their religion makes little dif-

¹ His Lordship is somewhat incoherent.—Ed.

ference in their manner or conduct ; they are esteemed the best troops in the Turkish service. I lived on my route two days at one, and three days again in a barrack at Salona, and never found soldiers so tolerable, though I have been in the garrisons of Gibraltar and Malta, and seen Spanish, French, Sicilian, and British troops in abundance. I have had nothing stolen, and was always welcome to their provision and milk. Not a week ago an Albanian chief (every village has its chief, who is called primate), after helping us out of the Turkish galley in her distress, feeding us, and lodging my suite, consisting of Fletcher, a Greek, two Athenians, a Greek priest, and my companion Mr. Hobhouse, refused any compensation but a written paper stating that I was well received ; and when I pressed him to accept a few sequins, ‘No,’ he replied ; ‘I wish you to love me, not to pay me.’ These are his words.

It is astonishing how far money goes in this country. While I was in the capital I had nothing to pay by the Vizier’s order, but since, though I have generally had sixteen horses, and generally six or seven men, the expense has not been *half* as much as staying only three weeks in Malta, though Sir A. Ball, the governor, gave me a house for nothing,

and I had only *one servant*. By the by I expect H * * * to remit regularly, for I am not about to stay in this province for ever. Let him write to me at Mr. Stranès, English consul, Patras. The fact is the fertility of the fields is wonderful, and specie is scarce, which makes this remarkable cheapness. I am going to Athens to study modern Greek, which differs from the ancient, though radically similar. I have no desire to return to England, nor shall I unless compelled by absolute want, and H * * * 's neglect; but I shall not enter into Asia for a year or two, as I have much to see in Greece; and I may perhaps cross into Africa, at least the Egyptian part. Fletcher, like all Englishmen, is very much dissatisfied, though a little reconciled to the Turks by a present of eighty piastres from the Vizier; which, if you consider everything, and the value of specie here, is nearly worth ten guineas English. He has suffered nothing but from cold, heat, and vermin, which those who lie in cottages and cross mountains in a cold country must undergo, and of which I have equally partaken with himself; but he is not valiant, and is afraid of robbers and tempests. I have no one to be remembered to in England, and wish to hear nothing from it, but that you are well, and a letter or two on business from

H * * *, whom you may tell to write. I will write when I can, and beg you to

Believe me your affectionate Son,

BYRON.

P.S.—I have some very ‘magnifiques’ Albanian dresses, the only expensive articles in this country. They cost fifty guineas each, and have so much gold that they would cost in England two hundred. I have been introduced to Hassim Bey and Mahmout Pacha, both little boys, grandchildren of Ali, at Yanina; they are totally unlike our lads, have painted complexions like rouged dowagers, large black eyes, and features perfectly regular. They are the prettiest little animals I ever saw, and are broken into the court ceremonies already. The Turkish salute is a slight inclination of the head with the hand on the heart; intimates always kiss. Mahmout is ten years old, and hopes to see me again; we are friends without understanding each other, like many other folks from a different cause. He has given me a letter to his father in the Morea, to whom I have also letters from Ali Pacha.

LETTER IV.

TO THE HON. MRS. BYRON.

Smyrna : April 9, 1810.

Dear Mother,—I know you will be glad to hear from me : I wish I could say I am equally delighted to write. However, there is no great loss in my scribbles, except to the portmanteau-makers, who, I suppose, will get all by and by. Nobody but yourself asks me about my creed, —what I am, am not, &c. &c. If I were to begin *explaining*, God knows where I should leave off ; so we will say no more about that, if you please. I am no ‘good soul,’ and not an atheist, but an English gentleman, I hope, who loves his mother, mankind, and his country. I have not time to write more at present, and beg you to believe me

Ever yours, &c.,

BYRON.

P.S.—Are the Miss * * * anxiously expecting my arrival and contributions to their gossip and *rhymes*, which are about as bad as they can be ?—B.

LETTER V.

TO THE HON. MRS. BYRON.

Smyrna : April 10, 1810.

Dear Mother,—To-morrow or this evening I sail for Constantinople in the ‘Salsette’ frigate, of thirty-six guns. She returns to England with our ambassador, whom she is going up on purpose to receive. I have written to you short letters from Athens, Smyrna, and a long one from Albania. I have not yet mustered courage for a second long epistle, and you must not be angry, since I take all opportunities of apprising you of my safety; but even this is an effort; writing is so irksome. I have been traversing Greece and Epirus, Illyrica, &c. &c. and you see by my date have got into Asia. Mr. H * * * has not written, though I wished to hear of the Norfolk sale, the Lancashire lawsuit, &c. &c. I am anxiously expecting fresh remittances. I believe you will like Nottinghamshire, at least my share of it. Pray accept my good wishes in lieu of a long letter, and believe me

Yours sincerely and affectionately,

BYRON.

LETTER VI.

TO THE HON. MRS. BYRON.

*Salsette Frigate, off the
Dardanelles : April 17, 1810.*

Dear Madam,—I write at anchor (on our way to Constantinople) off the Troad, which I traversed ten days ago. All the remains of Troy are the tombs of her destroyers, amongst which I saw that of Antilochus from my cabin window. These are large mounds of earth like the barrows of the Danes in your island. There are several monuments about twelve miles distant, of the Alexandrian Troas, which I also examined, but by no means to be compared with the monuments of Athens and Ephesus. This will be sent in a ship of war, bound with despatches for Malta. In a few days we shall be at Constantinople barring accidents. I have also written from Smyrna, and shall from time to time transmit short accounts of my movements, but I feel totally unequal to long letters.

Believe me yours very sincerely,

BYRON.

P.S.—No accounts from H * * * !!! Do not complain of short letters ; I write to nobody but yourself and Mr. H * * * .

LETTER VII.

TO THE HON. MRS. BYRON.

Constantinople : May 18, 1810.

Dear Madam,—I arrived here in an English frigate from Smyrna a few days ago, without any events worth mentioning, except landing to view the plains of Troy, and afterwards, when we were at anchor in the Dardanelles, *swimming* from Sestos to Abydos, in imitation of Monsieur Leander, whose story you, no doubt, know too well for me to add anything on the subject except that I crossed the Hellespont without so good a motive for the undertaking. As I am just going to visit the Captain Pacha, you will excuse the brevity of my letter. When Mr. Adair takes leave I am to see the Sultan and the mosques, &c.

Believe me yours ever,

BYRON.

Lord Byron's exploit of swimming across the Hellespont seems to have made a deep impression on his mind. Unlike Leander, his Heros were probably on either side.

LETTER VIII.

TO THE HON. MRS. BYRON.

Constantinople: May 24, 1810.

Dear Mother,—I wrote to you very shortly the other day on my arrival here, and, as another opportunity avails, take up my pen again, that the frequency of my letters may atone for their brevity. Pray did you ever receive a picture of me in oil by *Sanders* in *Vigo Lane*, London? (a noted limner); if not, write for it immediately; it was paid for, except the frame (if frame there be), before I left England. I believe I mentioned to you in my last that my only notable exploit lately has been swimming from Sestos to Abydos in humble imitation of *Leander*, of amorous memory; though I had no *Hero* to receive me on the other shore of the Hellespont. Of Constantinople you have of course read fifty descriptions by sundry travellers, which are in general so correct that I have nothing to add on the subject. When our ambassador takes his leave I shall accompany him to see the Sultan, and afterwards probably return to Greece. I have heard nothing of Mr. H * * *, but one remittance without any letter from that legal gentle-

man. If you have occasion for any pecuniary supply, pray use my funds as far as they go without reserve ; and lest there should not be enough, in my next to Mr. H * * * I will direct him to advance any sum you may want, leaving at your discretion how much, in the present state of my affairs, you may think proper to require. I have already seen the most interesting part of Turkey in Europe and Asia Minor, but shall not proceed further till I hear from England. In the meantime I shall expect occasional supplies, according to circumstances, and shall pass my summer amongst my friends the Greeks of the Morea. You will direct to Malta, where my letters are forwarded.

And believe me, with great sincerity, yours
ever,

BYRON.

P.S.—Fletcher is well. Pray take care of my boy Robert and the old man Murray. It is fortunate they returned ; neither the youth of the one nor the age of the other could have suited the changes of climate and fatigue of travelling.

Lord Byron's real character is well shown in his remarks on a certain Mr. B * * *, his tenant.

Perhaps those who have so long been inclined to cavil at his system of morality will herein find something to admire.

LETTER IX.

TO THE HON. MRS. BYRON.

Constantinople : June 28, 1810.

My dear Mother,—I regret to perceive by your last letter that several of mine have not arrived, particularly a very long one written in November last from Albania, where I was on a visit to the Pacha of that province. Fletcher has also written to his spouse perpetually. I have written twice briefly from this capital, from Smyrna, from Athens and other parts of Greece, from Albania, the Pacha of which province desired his respects to my mother, and said he was sure I was a man of high birth because I had small ears, curling hair, and white hands!!! He was very kind to me, begged me to consider him as a father, and gave me a guard of forty soldiers through the forests of Acroceraunia. But of this and other circumstances I have written to you at large, and yet hope you will receive my letters.

I also passed a fortnight on the Troad. The

tombs of Achilles and Æsyetes still exist in large barrows, similar to those you have doubtless seen in the North. The other day I was at Belgrade (a village in these environs), to see the house built on the same site as Lady Mary Wortley's. By the by her ladyship, as far as I can judge, has lied, but not half so much as any other woman would have done in the same situation. I have been in all the principal mosques by virtue of a firman; this is a favour rarely permitted to Infidels, but the ambassador's departure obtained it for us. I have been up the Bosphorus into the Black Sea, round the walls of the city, and indeed I know more of it by sight than I do of London.

I hope to amuse you some winter's evening with the details, but at present you must excuse me. I am not able to write long letters in June. I return to spend my summer in Greece. I shall not proceed farther into Asia, as I have visited Smyrna, Ephesus, and the Troad. I write often, but you must not be alarmed when you do not receive my letters; consider we have no regular post farther than Malta, where I beg you will in future send your letters, and not to this city.

'It is my opinion that Mr. B * * * ought to marry Miss R * * *; our first duty is not to do evil—but, alas! that is impossible—our next to

repair it, if in our power. The girl is his equal ; if she were his inferior, a sum of money and provision for the child would be some though a poor compensation ; as it is he should marry her. I will have no gay deceivers on my estate, and I shall not allow my tenants a privilege I do not permit myself—*that* of debauching each other's daughters. God knows I have been guilty of many excesses ; but, as I have laid down a resolution to reform, and lately kept it, I expect this Lothario to follow the example, and begin by restoring this girl to society. By the beard of my father ! he shall hear of it. Pray take some notice of Robert, who will miss his master. Poor boy, he was very unwilling to return. I trust you are well and happy. It will be a pleasure to hear from you.'

Believe me yours very sincerely,

BYRON.

LETTER X.

TO THE HON. MRS. BYRON.

Constantinople : July 1, 1810.

My dear Mother,—I have no wish to forget those who have any claim upon me, and shall be glad of the good wishes of R * * * when he

can express them in person, which it seems will be at some very indefinite date. I shall perhaps essay a speech or *two* in the House when I return, but I am not ambitious of a parliamentary career, which is of all things the most degrading and unthankful. If I could by my own efforts inculcate the truth, that a man is not intended for a despot or a machine, but as an individual of a community and fit for the society of kings, so long as he does not trespass on the laws or rebel against just governments, I might attempt to found a new Utopia; but as matters are at present, in course you will not expect me to sacrifice my health or self to your or anyone's ambition.

To quit this new idea for something you will understand better, how are Miss R.'s, the W.'s, and Mr. B.'s blue bastards? for I suppose he will not deny their *authorship*, which was, to say the least, imprudent and immoral. Poor Miss * * *; if he does not marry, and marry her speedily, he shall be no tenant of mine from the day that I set foot on English shores. I am glad you have received my portrait from Sanders. It does not *flatter* me, I think, but the subject is a bad one, and I must even do as Fletcher does over his Greek wines—make a face and hope for better. What

you told me of * * * is not *true*, which I regret for your sake and your gossip-seeking neighbours, whom present with my good wishes, and
Believe me yours, &c.

BYRON.

The next letter written is to Mrs. Byron, in which he dates from Athens, July 25, 1810. We extract one sentence, which, being unpublished, may be interesting as a context :

‘I left Constantinople with Adair, at whose adieux of leave I saw Sultan Mahmout, and obtained a firman to visit the mosques, of which I gave you a description in my last letter, now voyaging to England in the ‘Salsette’ frigate, in which I visited the plains of Troy and Constantinople.’

We see no reason why the following should have been omitted in Moore’s ‘Life of Byron,’ without any notification of the omission. Since, however, Lord Byron’s memoirs have been destroyed by that gentleman, it is perhaps not surprising, as both suppressions were upon the same pretext :¹

¹ Every honourable man must censure Mr. Moore for the insertion of what he considers proofs of Lord Byron’s ‘aversion to his mother,’ when he omits such a reference to the living as I have here inserted.

‘The Marquis of Sligo is here, and wishes to accompany me into the Morea. We shall go together for that purpose, but I am already wofully sick of travelling companions after a year’s experience of Mr. Hobhouse, who is on his way to Great Britain. . . .’

We have not compared each letter in ‘Moore’s Life’ with the exact version, but the next letter written to Mrs. Byron is carelessly made to end with ‘yours, &c.’ instead of ‘yours very faithfully,’¹ which Byron subscribed himself. This may seem trivial, but it manifests the occasional inaccuracies of Mr. Moore’s volumes.

LETTER XI.

TO THE HON. MRS. BYRON.

Athens: July 27, 1810.

Dear Mother,—I write again, in case you have not received my letters. To-day I go into the Morea, which will, I trust, be colder than this place, where I have tarried in the expectation of obtaining rest. Sligo has very kindly proposed a union of our forces for the occasion, which will be perhaps as uncomfortable to him as myself, judging from previous

¹ The letter having been published, is not inserted here.

experience, which, however, may be explained by my own irritability and hurry.

At Constantinople I visited the mosques, plains, and grandees of that place, which, in my opinion, cannot be compared with Athens and its neighbourhood; indeed, I know of no Turkish scenery to equal this, which would be civilised and Celtic enough with a little alteration in situation and inhabitants. An usual custom here, as at Cadiz, is to part with wives, daughters, &c., for a trifling present of gold or English arms (which the Greeks set a high value upon). The women are generally of the middle height, with Turkish eyes, straight hair, and clear olive complexion, but are not nearly so amorous as the Spanish belles, whom I have described to you in former letters. I have some feats to boast of when I return, which is undesired and undesirable—I always except you from my complaints, and hope you will expect me with the same delight that I anticipate meeting you. You can have no conception of Lord S.'s ecstasy when I informed him of my probable movements. The man is well enough and sensible enough by himself; but the swarm of servants, attendants, Turks, Greeks, and Englishmen that he carries with him, makes his society, or rather theirs, an

intolerable annoyance. If you will read this letter to —, you may imagine in what capacity I believe you excel. Before I left England I promised to give my silver-mounted whip (in your chamber) to Charles. Present it to him, poor boy, for I should not like him to suppose me as unfaithful as his *amante*, who, by the way, is no better than she should be, and no great loss to himself or his family. Hobhouse is silent, and has, I suppose, not yet returned; indeed, like myself, he appears to love the world better than England, and the Devil more than either, who I regret is not present to be informed of this. Do not fail, if you see him (Hobhouse, I mean), to repeat it, and the assurance that I am to him, with yourself,

Ever affectionately,

BYRON.

LETTER XII.

TO THE HON. MRS. BYRON.

Patras : October 2, 1810.

Dear Madam,—It is now several months since I have received any communication from you; but at this I am not surprised, nor indeed have I any complaint to make, since you have

written frequently, for which I thank you ; but I do very much condemn Mr. H., who has not taken the smallest notice of my many letters, nor of my requests before I left England, which I sailed from on this *very day* fifteen months ago. Thus one year and a quarter have passed away without receiving the least intelligence on the state of my affairs, and they were not in a position to admit of neglect, and I do conceive and declare that Mr. H. has acted negligently and culpably in not apprising me of his proceedings ; I will also add uncivilly. His letters, were there any, could not easily miscarry : the communications with the Levant are slow but tolerably secure, at least as far as Malta, and there I left directions which I know would be observed. I have written to you several times from Constantinople and Smyrna. You will perceive by my date I am returned into the Morea, of which I have been making the tour and visiting the Pacha, who gave me a fine horse and paid me all possible honours and attention. I have now seen a good portion of Turkey in Europe and Asia Minor, and shall remain at Athens and in the vicinity till I hear from England. I have punctually obeyed your injunctions of writing frequently ; but I shall not pretend to describe countries, which have

been already amply treated of. I believe before this time Mr. Hobhouse will have arrived in England, and he brings letters from me written at Constantinople. In them I mention having seen the Sultan and the mosques, and that I swam from Sestos to Abydos, an exploit of which I take care to boast.

I am here on business at present, but Athens is my head-quarters, where I am very pleasantly situated in a Franciscan convent.

Believe me, with great sincerity,

Yours very affectionately,

BYRON.¹

P.S.—Fletcher is well and discontented as usual. His wife don't write; at least her scrawls have not arrived. You will address to Malta. Pray have you never received my picture from Sanders, Vigo Lane, London?

The postal arrangements in those days being comparatively defective, are alluded to in a letter to Mrs. Byron, written from Athens, February 28, 1811:

¹ This letter was written at the time when Mr. Moore asserts, without any documentary authority whatever, that Lord Byron 'has a feeling little short of aversion to his mother.'

'I have received at different intervals several of your letters, but generally six months after date, some sooner, some later, and, though tolerably stationary, the delays appear just the same.'

The next letter to Mrs. Byron is subscribed 'yours ever,' not 'yours &c.,' as Moore prints it, but having been already published, is omitted in these pages.

LETTER XIII.

TO MISS —.

Newport Pagnell : August 2, 1811.

My dear L.,—*She* is dead: *who* I need not tell you. Peace be with her, but I would not recall her if I could. Ah! it does not matter now; but I should have wished her to see me *famous first*, for they tell me that I shall be: but I will not inflict any prophecies upon you. I will write again when I hear from you, but do not think that I forget you, though I forget (and wish to be forgotten by) a great many of *both sexes*. I am not all black—indeed rather pie-bald, and you need not fear any of the consequences you so pathetically mention. * * * I am not rich, as you know; and as I shall not sell Newstead, my *tithes* are not likely to accu-

multate. Write soon, I beg—write, write ; and believe me

Yours ever,

BYRON.

P.S.—What do you think of S. ? Is she likely to last, or only *twinkle* ? You have no occasion to be jealous of her or of anyone else for that matter, which will answer your allusion.—B.

LETTER XIV.

TO MISS ———.

St. James's Street : October 30, 1811.

Dearest L.,—I do not understand your letter or your quotations, but only know that I *love you*, and you know I shall never marry you, for which you have reason to be thankful. I wonder whom I shall espouse, for I must take up the conjugal *cross* some day, and perpetuate the name of Byron better than by my rhymes. I sent you a copy of the *Childe*, which you have never acknowledged : if you never got it, tell me, and I will forward you another by Fletcher. I do not know and have no wish to see R., who is not after my taste, which you know, or you would never dare to introduce a possible rival. Gods ! I think of going to Ire-

land, or Constantinople, or the Devil, one day; but my movements are as uncertain as my temper, which is at present as capricious as your own.

You write like a woman; I feel like a poet and a gentleman; so you need not reckon on my doing anything of that nature which you suppose me capable of. As I should be sorry not to see you, I will give you a flying visit before I again leave England; but you must be silent to everyone, even F., as much for your sake as my own. Now good bye. I will write you a longer letter in *variety* if you are reasonable, and don't bother

Yours &c.

BYRON.

LETTER XV.

TO MISS ———.

Dear L.,—Nonsense, nonsense, nonsense! You are so suspicious that I hardly know how to satisfy you. Of your accusations I will say nothing, except that they are unfounded—at least at present; but for what do you think I am about to forget you? You have not injured me, nor been *very* deceitful, though capricious enough, God knows; but then that is the least sin of a woman. I mean to be *virtuously* good

(is that nonsense?) for the next month, or even longer, if my health and intellect won't allow me to dissipate. I have made no friends to lose, and no enemies that I know of, lately; but, Heaven forgive them! have been so stirred up by everyone, matron, maid, and some dear young *misses* of blue recollection, that I scarcely know whether it is the Devil who addresses you, or

Your very affectionate,

BYRON.

P.S.—I have mislaid your last letter, and therefore cannot answer your other questions.

LETTER XVI.

TO MISS ——.

Newstead : January 18, 1812.

Dear L.,—I am glad you like * * *. There is something *real* in him. But don't read too much poetry—it won't help you to a husband; and don't marry, for it will bring you to the churchyard as well as to the church. The lines you sent me are good—for nothing, and you can write better if you like. Let me suggest after 'All for me,' instead of

I am not happy, and not very sore,
My living is thy will ;
Nor do regret the little pain I bore,
If I am thy love still !

I am not happy, and not very sad,
While I may do thy will ;
Nor now regret the parting pain I had,
If I am thy love still.

Send me more when you have time, which I have not, but expect your letters ; and don't talk about '*troubling* me.' Gods ! how have I troubled *you* ! But I hope you will forgive it, and me, and everybody : d——n them, and remember me the same.

Ever yours,
BYRON.

LETTER XVII.

TO MISS ———.

St. James's Street.

My dearest L.,—I have just received your letter. I am sorry you have not had my last two scrawls, for you may think I have forgotten you for once and in earnest. I don't know what I wrote about—probably myself, the only person besides yourself that I give much notice to,

forsooth. I repeat that I regret the circumstances you mention, and wish that they had never happened. But what is the use of wishing we had been good, when the punishment of our follies 'awakes the prompter?' So you see you are wiser after all. When I leave England I will not forget the things you ask for, and regret that you cannot accompany me, which is impossible, not for the sake of my character, but *yours*. I shall be glad to know how you are from time to time in health, pocket, and prosperity. I am not acquainted with any of the names you mention, which I cannot conceive that you do not already know. Expedite your answers to these of mine, which are above my, and beneath your, notice, and

Believe me yours ever,

BYRON.

LETTER XVIII.

TO MISS ——.

February 29, 1813.

Dear L.,—What do you mean by *ungrateful*? I am not, whoever of your acquaintance may be, but am damned and dunned to death by Christians and creditors, though, God knows, I am bad and poor enough; but I did not expect

you to be implacable. The child * * * is dead : I do not regret it, though a bastard Byron is better than no Byron. * * * You are about the only woman who has caused me a remorseful moment ; and when I say I am sorry for our mutual imprudence (to say nothing else), I do not express the compunction I feel. I don't know that I have been any *worse* than my fellows ; but this is a sorry comfort, and I don't rely upon it. I will write to you at intervals. Believe me it is from unselfish reasons that I say forget me (if you can), and God help us both, in this world and any other.

Yours ever, dearest L.,

BYRON.

LETTER XIX.

TO MISS —.

Newstead : January 8, 1814.

My dear L.,—What a gossip you are ! and I hate gossip, which you know is C.'s 'Lamentation.' No one can appreciate such veteran *inveterate* jokes that you send me, which I will not pension, at least for the present. This is your time for fractious disputes with every soul who will dispute with you, and listen to thy innocent regardings, which I, *you* know, *you* rogue, have proved sufficiently interesting and

irresistible. You may have the books you mention, if you consider them worthy of your acceptance, and I will entrust them to the care of C., who will not detain them long.

What a melodrama of Adios you must have seen!—which is not improbable under the circumstances and season. I have *recongratulated* S. on her appearance, which is better than her prospects; and, I think, more matrimonial. * * * You do not know *White*, and actually have never redde the ‘Rape.’ Read both, as you love me, and write soon to your affectionate

BYRON.

P.S.—More *Poeshie* by and by.

LETTER XX.

TO MISS ———.

October 19, 1815.

My dearest L.,—I am married at last, and mean no disrespect to Lady B., who, though she *may* be a seraph to her friends, and *really is*, I believe, a good woman, is a devil to me. We have nothing in common, except disquiet; and Heaven knows how much *ennui*. I expect my legitimate offspring, if there are any (which God forbid!), will undoubtedly be made of Styx and *nectar* (Gods!), and go down to posterity as the

students of Bibles, and butchers' bills, and the scribblers of blasphemy and I. O. U. s. Not that I know or care much about any anticipated progeny of myself and Lady B., whom God preserve and take care of when he can, if I live longer in this land of marital dominion. You *may* 'pray for me,' if you like and if it pleases you. I don't often '*soften*,' but I never think of you without regret, and the wish that we had never met or never parted. Burn this,

For the sake of your affectionate

P.S.—Burn.

BYRON.

LETTER XXI.

TO MISS ———.

Milan: October 26, 1816.

Dear L.,—I wonder if you have received my letters, for no answers have been forwarded to me at the present time of writing. I wrote to you yesterday what I intended to be a long letter of anecdote, biography, and veracity; but the Gods were not propitious, and the weather much too warm to permit, which is not of so much consequence as the fact that I have not forgotten you, and you must accept them in that belief. R. is no more; he was better than a servant to me, but a friend in everything,

more faithful than those who worry me at present. * * * We have a sun here, but you must thrive, and grumble, and die if you can in a country whose curse is its climate, and whose tenants are as dull as its weather, and as uncertain as its temperature. Forgive my execrations, which are excited by the comparison of your island with this glorious country, where oranges hang within the grasp of every beggar, or myrtle budding for me and my acquaintance, who I am convinced regret it, which is mightily like yourself and friends.

If you will inquire after my health and intentions, I will tell you the former is as well as I have any reason to expect, and my intentions are as good as they will ever be, which is saying much in these present circumstances, as thy jealous nature must allow. Do not fail to notify the epidemics of the island, and particularly your share in them. * * * I can't bear the thought of a final parting with you or anyone; and, what with lies and a little truth, I have for some time been in the danger of losing—with yourself, all of them, which will be however, more lamented by me than by you or them, for I shall not look for any others.

Though you have not satisfied my curiosity, and do not throw me a morsel of gossip, your

letters I find too short and too agreeable, which is probably the only reason I ever possessed for retaining your friendship, though that has been as unfortunate as any other. The women here give me no rest, but do not bore me, nor prate scandal of their neighbours, at which I am surprised, for they are all beautiful and of a jealous disposition. In the contest of superior charms, I know of no women in England to equal them, with the exception of yourself, perhaps, and my mother, who, when alive, was very good to me, far more so than I deserved or can deserve in these cursed climes. I will not bore you with descriptions of my ladies, who are affectionate and handsome enough for England, but appear alike beneath this fiery sun, which almost singes my hair and my virtue, and creates no little remorse for twilight deeds the next morning.

Mary will forgive me for forgetting her and her husband; you know I never desire quarrels with anyone who is not as quarrelsome as myself, for there is no satisfaction in perpetual war, and little pleasure in amiable treachery. Besides the inconvenient distance and spare courage of M * * *, I have no time for broils and cannot sufficiently answer my accounts here and there, perhaps neither. Foreseeing the

things you mention, I gave instruction to C * * * to act in my name and by my authority in any way he considered suitable to your honour and my own. If he has proved unfaithful, he shall repent it; but I conjecture he will not attempt any cunning, which is not natural to him, for he can excel in nothing but what he was first born to—that is, eating, lying, and sleeping. I am humiliated by the recollection of those circumstances, and will not omit to protect you from your friends, among whom, with your permission, I will include myself. The customary preparations made for the event were, I rejoice to hear, unnecessary, but what did M * * * expect and do, or why did he not write? Convey my *remembrance* to him, and desire in my name the honour of an interview. If he is still unappeased, I will write or come myself, but you must not rely upon my future actions, and perhaps as little on my words, for constancy is not natural to a man except towards his mother or sisters. Be that as it may, I have no reason to forget you, or endeavour to do so, until you give me just cause*for alteration. I shall anxiously expect your letter, and am,

My dear L., yours ever,

BYRON.

LETTER XXII.

TO MISS ——.

Milan : October 31, 1816.

My dearest L.,—You may prepare now for a long letter, though I scarcely feel well enough in mind or body to write *prettily*. How long it is since I saw you, and how much has been done since then, till there is nothing but myself left to critics and damnation! I am here still and *still*, and don't think of coming back again, at least for some months. I decline saying anything about Lady B. She is my wife, and I married her, faults, money, and self, with my eyes open, and so for ever hold my peace, as the good books say—which is satisfactory to *one at least*. I am not alone, God knows: creditors and stray Englishmen take care of that. What a quiet life you have! And look at me. Hunted, pestered to death with questions and *answers*, and bored by fractious countrymen and sucking poets, God help me! * * * Forget and forgive the last allusion, and don't mention S. to me again: if you do, I shall forget you (if I can), and give your miniature to Fletcher. My poor L., what a curse I have been to you and everybody except M.,

who gets a little now and then ! God knows he earns it. Did you ever see a man die ? I *have*, and hope never again to behold such a hideous spectacle. When I die I should like to expire upon a bed of roses, with a flask of sherbet at my head, in the evening, or still better with my dearest L.'s arms around her

Ever affectionate,

BYRON.

P.S.—Forgive this last effusion.

P.S.—I have begun the Bible (O. T.) *again*, and shall *wade* into Job to-morrow, with whom I feel myself at home ! Adios.

LETTER XXIII.

TO MISS ———.

Venice : November 10, 1816.

My dear L.,—I say don't read my poems. You will out of spite. But still I say don't touch them ; no, not even with the T. F. But, may I be forgiven, I don't regret the ill (if any) which my scribblings have done, if they get me a name, and at least some little admiration, which is meat and drink. By and by, perhaps, I shall turn critic, preacher, or editor (but God forbid !), and relinquish the life which I *hate*,

when I am troubled by the liver * * * Write every day if you will—but write soon and affectionately to

Yours ever,
BYRON.

P.S.—I have begun, and mean to go on with, some good works at this present: you shall know about them soon, if you are a good girl and don't bore me with quotations.

LETTER XXIV.

Venice: November 20, 1816.

Dear L.,—There is no need for further explanations, which bore me, and cannot give myself pleasure to read or you to write. If M * * * is well, I am thankful, and rejoice with you and your family; but if she is not better, I can hardly be sorry, except for your sake, which is always dear to me, and will, I trust, be remembered through the winter. God knows, but does all for the best, and I am not destitute of some belief in him, though poets, parsons, fools, and hypocrites do much to vex him—and me, who am a sad dog just now, and not given to prayers. If I had begun as you remark *early*, things would have been different; but it is too late to commence the innocence and purity of

youth, which my present connexions and habits render impossible, however disposed I might be to attempt it. It will be no small gratification to me to hear from you soon, for you do not weary nor deceive me as others, but from whom, by God's blessing, I hope to be separated very expeditiously. If you have any wish for shawls, perfumes, or relics, I will forward some to your address, and leave the remainder to chance or the billow, which conceals much that is or was of value in my eyes. But I will not *sentimentalise*, which I hate as much as M * * *, with the addition of sincerity in t——.

* * * * *

Yours affectionately,
BYRON.

LETTER XXV.

TO MISS ——.

Ten miles from Venice: December 1, 1816.

Dear L.,—Oons, what a flash! and the thunder is coming on. I rode to N. yesterday, and came here like a walking water-spout, or Mr. Jonah's whale, of whom—the whale, I mean—I do not doubt you have heard or redde of late. You must imagine a long expanse of low hills, dark clouds just *meeting*, the sea in the

distance, and the white houses of N * * * below, with a glow upon the waves, which rise and fall with an impatient, sudden motion. Then the trees on either side, intersected by low gardens and barren vineyards, will complete the view from our position. The storm fell suddenly, and torrents of rain intercepted the sight for some moments, while the wind roared almost as much as Fletcher, who sat down and sobbed amusingly. When we had a moment's sea-view the sight was grand, and would have made a poet of me if I had not been one. We reached this place at eleven, or rather twelve, for the roads were impassable through the rains, and we were obliged to halt outside the town until the rivers abated. I went to bed in some fear of the morning, but, thank God! I am none the worse for my adventure. Do not complain of R.: he is not the author of * * *, and I do not regret its appearance, which is not saying little, considering everything. I shall hope to hear from you soon,

And am yours &c.

BYRON.

P.S.—The Gods forgive this jargon, for you never will, and I hardly know why I am scribbling on thus. The rain is pelting and the

thunder rolling as I write, which somehow puts me in a bad humour—a very common *mental* state of mine lately. What a mighty trump you have blown about my *works* in your dwarf of a letter!—which is shabby of you, for I thirsted for gossip. Luckily letters came from England by the same post, which consoled me; but they are too fine a chronicle to be sincere. It vexes me that you could not accept my word for the matter which has as little sense as honour or consideration—at least in its authors. Marry if you like: he has half a score more years than you, which will *restrain* you, and keep you quiet.—B.

P.S.—Do *not* read the rhymes at your coteries.

I really don't know, my dear L., that you'll marry,

* * * * *

* * * * *

But your husband and you are so d——y quiet,
That one never knows what it'll be till you
try it.

You, L., are all love, and your spouse is all
money,

So God bless the new lunatick *Ceres* and honey.

A month you'll endure ; but affection abating,
The rest of your lives you will finish in hating ;
Then happy and free, you'll at length live
divided,

A most blessed state, in which my wife and I
did.

Yet don't by this pæan of warning be fright-
ened,

But love on together, and live unenlightened.¹

LETTER XXVI.

TO MISS ———.

Venice : January 2, 1817.

Dear L.,—Not quite forgotten even yet. Do not write, as God only knows where I shall be to-morrow, but I will scrawl when I am more settled. So you are not married yet. Well, I can't complain, I suppose, and you will not accept money from *me*. That cursed pride of yours will ruin you one day. I don't know what I am writing, scarcely what I am thinking, and only hope to see you once more ; but I have run to the end of the Devil's tether, and I fear shall be pulled in soon again. Do not believe all you hear about me—I *hope* you will

¹ These lines were enclosed with the letter.—Ed.

not. Whatever it is, you can hear nothing too infamous, except that I have forgotten you, which you must not think, though my letters are few, and not *long* enough. What I am doing is not of much consequence. Scribbling, raving, and falling into love twenty times a month; getting *sober*, scribbling and philosophising upon the manners and *morals* of the country women. Believe that or not, just as you please, and God knows you have reason enough to doubt it. But fate compels me, and necessity, and I can no more help sinning *now* than I could save myself from damnation, hereafter. Write to me—no, I will write again, and am

Yours affectionately,

BYRON.

LETTER XXVII.

Venice: Thursday.

Dear L.,—It is not in the nature of things to stoop too low, and I trust you will not forget your proper dignity and *mine*. I will assist you when I can, and request my friends to remember you when I die, if you continue respectable and honest, which is not too general among young ladies or gentlemen, at least in

England. You have not forgotten my messages, &c. I hope your friends and sisters will do you justice if you send them, and if you inform me of your intentions on the matter, I will act accordingly; but I cannot promise that all shall be satisfactorily arranged. Your letters are full of complaints about your station, your poverty, and myself, which is not worthy of you nor agreeable to me.

Do you think that I am happy? I am not at all times, and will endeavour to express my misery even to your satisfaction, but have at present no hopes of improving my condition or yours, for which I am sorry but still hopeful. Ten years ago I had no expectation of my present life or of any friends, though I recollect nothing disagreeable of your own. My opinion is that I shall live beyond my reputation, as you have done, though perhaps variously, or both, and expect no better end than the ocean for the reception of my body, and sun or moon (God wot) for my soul. I cannot lawfully or logically look for more, and if in another life I am united to those I love, I shall be fortunate in my decease, which is more than I have any reason to expect. Had I met with them at the commencement of my life, I should have become at least a less trouble to my friends or

delight to my enemies, who have not been few nor quiet lately. The regenerators of morality are savage and suburban, but I hope to distance them all by and by after their own sort.

* * * * *

You do not know my sister ; she is one of the best and kindest of women I have ever met with. If she can be any consolation to you, or assist your family in any way, I beg you will apply to her with my authority and this letter.

Your affectionate,

BYRON.

The following was enclosed with the preceding letter :

LETTER XXIII.

Venice : February 6, 1817.

My dear Mary,—Recollect I am at all times only too happy to assist you in any way you may think best. If you will address a letter to Mr. * * * I will write to him also, and request him to accept you for a month at least ; but the theatres, I understand, are very full, and engagements nearly or quite completed. You will take care of L. till my return, which will

not be at present, and allay her conscience and curiosity if you can, for which I shall be very much indebted. Yours,

BYRON.

LETTER XXIX.

Venice : August 1, 1817.

My dear L.,—I thank you for your letter, and desire to live on in my own manner without interference from my friends, who may consider me a divine subject for example or reproof. I cannot see you, and shall probably return to England no more unless to prove I am not ashamed of my actions, or to answer any personal attacks upon you or yours.

I am far from being happy, as you know, and wish that I could recall my life again, for I have little hope of happiness on earth, and no expectation of attaining it hereafter. I do not experience what you pathetically call remorse, for I have known that with a score of other meditations, and have no wish to live in any state but the present, and in no condition but my own. God forgive me and them all! I am misunderstood, flattered by women, pestered, cursed, hated, reproached, and forgotten to such a degree, that I am most grateful for the night and hail the morning with disappoint-

ment. I have some advice to give you, my dearest L., which you will follow an' you love me ; but I must retain it for a future letter, if I hear from you at a reasonable time and length.

* * * Job is finished. S. is gone, and myself forgotten by all but my creditors, who are nearly satisfied, I hope ; but my bones will not profit much, whatever they may wish or expect. I understand that M. is up in arms. Quiet her if you can, and assure her of my unchanged attachment, &c., which is as constant to yourself.

Yours,

BYRON.

LETTER XXX.

TO THE HON. DOUGLAS KINNAIRD.

June 12, 1813.

Dear Sir,—How does Hobhouse's work go on, or rather off?—for that is the essential part. In yesterday's paper, immediately under an advertisement upon 'Strictures &c. &c.,' I see most appropriately consequent a poem with *strictures* on Lord Byron, Mr. Southey, and others ; though I am afraid neither Mr. Southey's poetical distemper nor mine, nor others', is of the suppressive or stranguary kind. You may send me the prescription of this kill or cure physician ; the medicine is compounded

at White's, Fleet Street. As I have nothing else to do, I may enjoy it, like Sir Fretful, or the Archbishop of Granada, or any other personage in like predicament. Recollect that my lacquey returns in the evening, and that I set out for Portsmouth to-morrow. All here are very well and much pleased with your politeness during their stay in town.

Believe me ever yours truly,

BYRON.

P.S.—I have read Parson Boyd's 'Dante,' in which he seems to display his knowledge of the subject by a covert attack or two on some of his own. He probably wants another living; at least I judge so by the prominence of his piety—although he was always pious, even when he was left by a washerwoman in the New Road. I have seen him cry over her picture, which he generally wore under his left arm-pit. But he is a good man, and I have no doubt does his duties by the parish. As to the poetry of his new-fangled stanza, I wish they would write the octave of Spenser; we have no other legitimate measure of that kind. He is right in defending Pope against the bastard pelicans of the poetical winter day, who add insult to their parricide by sucking the blood

of the parent of English *real* poetry—poetry without fault—and then spurning the bosom which fed them.

Yours,

BYRON.

An eastern tour had been determined upon by Lord Byron and Dr. Clark, the celebrated *savant* and traveller of that day. The plague breaking out prevented the projected voyage.¹

LETTER XXXI.

TO DR. CLARK.

2 Albany : April 19, 1814.

Dear Sir,—Certainly * * * and I only regret that circumstances will not permit me to join you there immediately. I only add that if we meet either at home or abroad within a reasonable time, I hope you will allow me to renew our acquaintance with the joint expedition, if the last should not interfere with more agreeable

¹ For a biography of Dr. Clark see 'Macmillan's Magazine' for January 1870, in which appears a short biography—of which the fault is its brevity—of the great traveller.
—ED.

pursuits on your part. You will find Hotname at Paris, and your sword¹ and trunk here in your way.

Ever yours,

B.

LETTER XXXII.

TO DR. CLARK.

(No date.)

Dear Sir,—We sail on board the ‘Boyne,’ and must be at Portsmouth on Saturday next. I have only just heard this. Could I see you now?

Ever yours,

BYRON.

LETTER XXXIII.

TO J. HOPNER, ESQ.²

January 18, 1818.

I wish you joy, and hope that the young Venetian and his mother are both doing their best.

¹ It had been intended that they should appear at the Court of the Sultan in uniform. The sword referred to is still in possession of J. W. Clark, Esq., Scroop House, Cambridge.—ED.

² At the moment of publication we received the above letter from Mr. Waller, autograph collector, Fleet Street, London, to whom we desire to express our obligations.—ED.

TO HOPPNER.

His father's sense, his mother's grace,¹
In him I hope will always fit so, &c.

Ever yours,

BYRON.

LETTER XXXIV.

TO T. NATHAN, ESQ.

January 1815.

Dear Nathan,—Murray being about to publish a complete edition of my *poetical effusions*, has a wish to include the stanzas of the Hebrew Melodies. Will you allow him that privilege without considering it an infringement on your copyright? I certainly wish to oblige the gentleman; but you know, Nathan, it is against all good fashion to give and take back. I therefore cannot grant what is not at my disposal. Let me hear from you on the subject.

Dear Nathan, yours truly,

BYRON.

To T. Nathan, Esq.

The above request was, we believe, granted.

¹ The whole verse is published in Moore's Life, and elsewhere in ten different languages.—ED.

*LETTER XXXV.*TO THE EDITOR OF 'GALIGNANI'S MESSENGER.'¹

Venice : April 27, 1819.

Sir,—In various numbers of your Journal I have seen mentioned a work entitled 'the Vampire,' with the addition of my name as that of the Author. I am not the author, and never heard of the work in question until now. In a more recent paper I perceive a formal annunciation of 'the Vampire' with the addition of an account of my 'residence in the Island of Mitylene,' an island which I have occasionally sailed by in the course of travelling some years ago through the Levant—and where I should have no objection to reside—but where I have never yet resided. Neither of these performances are mine ; and I presume that it is neither unjust nor ungracious to request that you will favour me by contradicting the advertisement to which I allude. If the book is clever, it would be base to deprive the real writer—

¹ This letter, for the insertion of which we are not responsible, has been lithographed in a French edition of Lord Byron's works.—ED.

whoever he may be—of his honours;—and if stupid—I desire the responsibility of nobody's dulness but my own. You will excuse the trouble I give you,—the imputation is of no great importance,—and as long as it was confined to surmises and reports, I should have received it, as I have received many others, in silence. But the formality of a public advertisement of a book I never wrote—and a residence where I never resided—is a little too much—particularly as I have no notice of the contents of the one, nor the incidents of the other.

I have besides a personal dislike to 'Vampires,' and the little acquaintance I have with them would by no means induce me to divulge their secrets. You did me a much less injury by your paragraphs about 'my devotion' and 'abandonment of society for the sake of religion'—which appeared in your 'Messenger' during last Lent;—all of which are not founded on fact—but you see I do not contradict them, because they are merely personal—whereas the others in some degree concern the reader.

You will oblige me by complying with my request of contradiction. I assure you that I know nothing of the work or works in question—and have the honour to be—(as the cor-

respondents to magazines say) 'your constant reader' and

Very obed^t humble Serv^t,
(Signed) BYRON.

LETTER XXXVI.

TO COLONEL ARMSTRONG.

Date, circ. 1822.

Sir,¹—I have to acknowledge the honour of your letter. It would have given me pleasure to have treated with you for your yacht; but I have already had one built at Genoa, under the directions of Captain Wright and Captain Roberts, R.N., who have had the goodness to superintend her progress. This renders any further trouble to you, sir, unnecessary; but I am not the less obliged by your offer, and have the honour to be,

Your very obed^t,
Humble serv^t,
NOEL BYRON.

¹ For the circumstances under which this letter was written, the reader is referred to 'Moore's Life and Letters of Lord Byron.'—Ed.

LETTER XXXVII.

TO MR. RIDGE.

Dorant's Hotel, Albemarle Street:
January 9, 1808.

Mr. Ridge,—In 'Childish Recollections'¹ omit the whole character of '*Euryolus*' and insert instead the lines to 'Florio' as a part of the poem, and send me a proof in course.

&c. &c.

BYRON.

P.S.—The first line of the passage to be omitted begins,

'Shall fair Euryolus,' &c., and ends at
'Toil for more,' omit the *whole*.

What follows is taken from Byron's original manuscript in the Bodleian Library, Oxford, of the 'Ode from the French.' There are many points of interest in the alterations, which mark the gradual and changeful composition of his poems. The line at the commencement of Part II. would, we think, have been better as originally written:

'Chieftain of the snow-white plume,'
than as now printed:

¹ See 'Hours of Idleness.'—ED.

As then shall shake the world with wonder—
 Never yet was seen such Lightning—
 As o'er Heaven shall then be brightening.

2.

{ *Think ye* { *slain of banded*
 { *that we name the Hero*
 { *Him whom yet you dread to name*
 { *is gone*
 { The Chief { hath fallen!—but not by you—
 { *W* { *in war as*
 { *His weakness* { *made you*
 { *Vanquishers* { *of Waterloo*
 { *himself a*
 When { the soldier-citizen
 { *He turned*
 { Swayed not from his fellow men
 Save in deeds that led them on
 { *life was lost* { *sun*
 Where { Glory smiled on Freedom's { son
 { *Tyrants*
 Which ¹ of all the { *Despots banded—*
 { *banded things*
 With that youthful chief competed—
 Who could boast our ² France defeated?
 Till lone Tyranny commanded—

¹ Printed 'who.'—ED.

² In the published editions this is printed 'o'er.'—ED.

Till { *the Heros*
 goaded by ambition's sting
 The Hero sunk into the King
 Then { *she*
 he fell—so perish all—
 Who would men by Man enthrall?—

3.

{ *Chieftain of*
 And thou too of the snow white plume—
 { *Could* { *but gave a bloody*
 Whose realms { refuse thee even a tomb—
 { *Great thy fame—* { *how vile thy doom—* —
 Better had'st thou still been leading
 { *despots' hirelings*
 France o'er { Hosts of hirelings bleeding—
 Than { *thyself*
 sold thyself to death and shame
 For an unavailing name¹
 Such as He of Naples wears
 Who—thy lute-worn title bears.²
 Little did'st thou deem when { *charging*
 dashing
 { *On thy warhorse* { *each*
 On thy warhorse through { the ranks.
 Like a stream which bursts³ its banks

¹ Printed 'for a meanly royal name.'—ED.² Printed 'blood bought.'—ED.³ Printed 'burst.'—ED.

With Helmets cleft—and sabres ^{{f}clashing—
 {Such
 Shone and shivered fast around thee—
 Of the fate at last which found thee.—

Was that haughty {plume
 By a slave's dishonest blow?—
 Once it onward bore the brave—
 Like Foam upon the highest wave¹—

{ You
And stand beneath the shining banner

{ *There that plume* { *was like* { *as*
 { *There the eagle's* { *a*
 { *burning crest*
 { *waved her wing*

{ *Through*
 { *And storms bright glowing flashing*
 { *which*
 } Where with { *thunder clouds* } to fan her
 { *sulphurous waves*
 { *flight*
 } Who her { *wing* } could then arrest?

¹ Afterwards printed,

'Once as the moor swayed o'er the tide
It rolled in air the warrior's guide.'—ED.

4.

{ *The Chiefs are victors*
 { O'er glories gone the invaders march
 { *O'er Gaul did Triumph mourn her*
 { Weeps Triumph o'er each levelled arch

{ *may*
 But { let Freedom rejoice
 With her heart in her voice
 But her hand on her sword

{ *he*
 Doubly { she shall be adored
 Which awaits but the word
 { *As it leapt*
 { So leap forth from its sheath

{ *resume*
 And { redeem her lost wreath
 too well

France hath twice ^ been taught
 The 'Moral lesson' dearly bought—

{ *But Liberty*
 { Her Safety sits not on a throne

{ *For*
 { With Capet or Napoleon—
 But in equal rights & laws

{ *And*
 { Heart and hands in one great cause
 Freedom such as God hath given

Her unconquerable Spirit¹—
When once more her hosts assemble
Let the tyrants only tremble²—

Smils't { *ye*
thou at their menace. Ye!

{ *Who*
{ Smile they at this idle threat?
Crimson tears will follow yet—

¹ This is printed 'Her for ever bounding spirit;' which is the better, critic and reader can decide.—ED.

² Printed 'Tyrants shall believe and tremble.—ED.

THE
ATTRIBUTED LETTERS.

THE following are the 'Letters attributed' to Lord Byron, and whether they be genuine or not, the doubts surrounding their origin and their own intrinsic merit render them so interesting, that it is thought necessary to insert them in this volume. Some little explanation is thrown upon them by a letter from Mr. White to Mr. Murray which appeared in the *Athenæum* of March 20, 1852; but whether the letters sold to Mr. White were wholly forged, or genuine letters of Lord Byron, or forged copies from actual MSS. of the poet, is wrapt in mysteries which have not been thoroughly explained.

This is the letter to Mr. Murray :—

'One afternoon, during the summer of 1848, a well-dressed, lady-like young person called to know if I purchased autograph letters, as she

had two unpublished ones of Lord Byron's to dispose of. I replied, that although I had been in business some twenty-five years, I had never purchased an autograph letter on my own account. The name of Byron, however, and unpublished, struck me as something worth looking at, and after doing so, I made a purchase. Shortly after she called again and brought two more. I then questioned her as to who she was, where she came from, and how she obtained them. She said they were the property of her eldest sister, who resided at St. John's Wood; that they had been left her by their father, a deceased surgeon, who had been an autograph collector, especially of the MSS. of these poets, having made a point of laying his hands upon all he could of their unpublished productions. She also said that he knew Fletcher, Byron's valet; had attended him professionally on his deathbed; and that Fletcher had given him some books which Lord Byron had left him, when he died in Greece. These books, however, and the Shelley Letters, she said, her sister would not part with on any account; that she herself had never seen them, her sister having always kept them locked up. That the reason of her sister parting with them one or two at a time, arose from her unwilling-

ness to part with them at all ; which would not have taken place but from the circumstance of an agent running away with some rents, on which they depended to exist for a certain period.

‘ She said the reason her sister did not come herself, arose from her being an invalid, much confined to the house. As the afternoon was an awkward time for me to be interrupted by her calling—the letters taking some time to read and examine—I told her that if her sister from necessity was obliged to part with more, she had better call in the evening between half-past six and eight o’clock, at which time I should have more leisure to examine what she brought before I retired from business for the day. She said that would suit her remarkably well, as she was in the habit of coming from St. John’s Wood and returning in the omnibus, and would be her most leisure time, as through their only keeping one servant, and her sister being an invalid, she had a great many domestic duties to attend to during the day.

‘ She continued calling from time to time over a space of several months, according as she stated her sister’s necessities compelled her to part with these precious relics. After she had brought me, as she said, the whole of the Byron

Letters, the necessities and ill-health of her sister still continuing, she commenced bringing the Shelley Letters. When the lady had brought me all the Shelley Letters, she commenced with what her sister thought the most precious of all—Fletcher's dying bequest to her father of the Byron books. After she had ceased bringing these, which I bought without the slightest suspicion, as I am sure much cleverer persons than myself would have done, she told me that there was an end of the relics. I remember one excuse she made for always coming to me was, that it was her sister's particular wish that, as I had purchased a portion, she would like me to have the whole if I would only give her such prices, or nearly so, as she had fixed upon as their value in her own mind. That her sister knew pretty well the value, as she was in the habit of obtaining marked auctioneers' catalogues, to enable her to judge of the value of such "literary property." That a friend of hers used to attend specially at sales to procure the information. All this appeared very feasible. She now began to come less often, and finished by bringing some manuscript books of other descriptions, which I bought merely to oblige her, having purchased the others. As I did not wish to keep these

latter purchases, I sent them to Puttick and Simpson's Auction Room; the date of their sale can easily be ascertained by Mr. Puttick referring to his books; and on the evening of the day on which they were sold, Mr. Rowsell, the bookseller, of Great Queen Street, called upon me, from information he had received from Mr. Puttick as to their proprietorship. He informed me he had sold one of these books to a Mr. Byron, who had not paid him for it, and he wanted to know where he lived. This was the second time I had heard this name mentioned, and I now felt somewhat startled, thinking I might possibly have been deceived by some false story of the lady's. Her manner, however, was so artless, open, and candid, and all that I had purchased seemed so strictly *bonâ fide*, that I felt quite safe as to the large investment I had made, and the genuineness of my purchases. The MS. book Mr. Rowsell had sold Mr. Byron, and which was the cause of the inquiry, was in some eight or nine volumes; but the name I totally forget. A short time after, the Incognita called again, and I think she told me that she had brought the last relic her sister possessed. What it was I do not remember; but I immediately accused her of coming to me with false representations,

and told her what I had found out. She made sundry excuses why she had done so ; told me a great deal about her husband, his misfortunes, &c. I had repeatedly asked her where her sister lived in St. John's Wood, but she begged I would not press the question, as her sister would much rather not have it known from motives of delicacy. I was now, however, determined to know her residence, and sent a person with her in a cab, which she took to Judd Place, New Road, with a view of bringing her husband to me. He was, however, from home ; and she promised to call with him the next day ; and they did call, when he gave various excuses and reasons why he had preserved an incognito in the disposal of his MSS. and books. That he was writing the life of his father, a portion of which he showed me in print ; that he had travelled all over England, France, Italy, and Switzerland, to collect autographs and relics of his father from persons whom he knew to possess them ; that he had purchased a great many of the letters of Mr. Hodges of Frankfort, and of Mr. Wright, a gentleman connected with the Quarterly Review ; that most of the books had belonged to Fletcher, his father's valet, to whom they had been given at Byron's death ; that the Shelley

Letters had been collected in various ways ; some, he thought, from the Marlow box, and from various quarters which I cannot remember, as it is now nearly three years since. He gave me a written attestation that every thing that I had bought was genuine, but he would not engage they should not be printed, in the Life of his Father, which he was preparing. This must have been some time after I sold you the Letters, and as we had no occasion of meeting after that circumstance from that time to this, accounts for my not having told you of the last affair.'

LETTER I.¹

TO LADY DAVIES.

Cheltenham, September 26, 1812.

My dear Lady Davies,—‘I thank you. I am not of many words, but I thank you,’ and hope you will approve my laconic acknowledgment. Cupid and Death, says the fabulist, happening to sleep at one time in the same retreat, their *arrows* being scattered on the floor became intermingled ; and each, by mistake, took some of the other’s. Hence the occasional mortality of *young* persons, and the dotage of old ones.

¹ To Lady Davies, Hill Street, Mayfair, London.—ED.

I was fearful, the other day, the grim king of terrors, intending to cut my frail thread of existence, had only wounded me with a shaft of Cupid's; but I was mistaken. You must not, however, inquire too strictly after my *reasons* for saying so; they are scarcely known to myself, for what is so deceitful as the heart. The little elegant compliments, 'where more is meant than meets the ear,' are of all others the most insinuating. I never expected that sentence to be so applied. Adieu! Hasten your answer. Always

Yours humbly and truly,

BYRON.

LETTER II.¹

TO JOHN PARRY, ESQ.

Bennet Street, April 27, 1813.

My dear Parry,—Many thanks. I enclose you a draft for your protégé. As to Barrymore, I cannot change my opinion. If massy limbs, an iron voice, and an eye whose leaden expression has no rival but in the ocular glare of those venerable gentlemen, Gog and his brother, who protect the entrance to our civic

¹ To John Parry, Esq., at the office of the 'Morning Chronicle.'—Ed.

senate at Guildhall, were reliable and legitimate claims to histrionic excellence, Mr. Barrymore might proudly disclaim all competition ; but as brains happen to be reckoned an ingredient in the composition of an actor, it is no wonder his pretensions have never been acknowledged. Every man, however, has a right to make the best use of the faculties he possesses ; and I do not therefore blame Mr. Barrymore that he bellows so loud, because, if he neglected his lungs, what other proof could he give of his privilege to be heard ? I remember his playing *Octavian* and *Sir Edward Mortimer* some years ago ; but certainly he used the managers very ill, for one-half the audience preferred hearing him outside the theatre and saving their cash. I happened to be in company with an old gentleman who was very deaf, and always used an ear-trumpet. His admiration of Mr. Barrymore, however, had no bounds when he discovered—as he could not fail to do—that he needed no artificial medium of sound to hear his voice. When he is motionless his arms hang so forward that he always reminds me of a penguin, the elegant appearance of whose fins dangling by their sides on the shores of the Southern Ocean has been frequently described by travellers. Yet I do not disapprove of his

Buckingham in 'Richard the Third,' and think that the suavity and grace with which he cajoles the lord mayor and sheriffs are precisely of that quality and stamp which would subdue the faculties of any turtle-eating alderman who may arrive at that civic dignity. If I can be of service to you, command me, and believe me

Ever yours,
BYRON.

LETTER III.

TO MR. KEAN.

2 Albany, April 29, 1814.

My dear Kean,—Thank you. To pass by a multitude of other blunders still more revolting to the ear, I will particularise one curious instance of editorial pragmatism. There is a considerable portion of the scene between *Glo'ster* and *Lady Anne*, in the original play of 'Richard the Third,' that part I mean in which they indulge 'the keen encounter of their wits' in a long series of repartee, which Shakspeare, obviously for the terseness and smartness of the effect, had written in octo-syllabic verse; and which in the old folio of 1623 is so printed. But the sapient editors of a more critically enlightened age—the *restorers* of the *genuine text*

—not being able to conceive how anything less than ten syllables could constitute a dramatic line (as if there were not licences and varieties of verse enough in the scenes of Shakspeare to have suggested a very different conclusion), set their fingers to work and counted the syllables into what they call regular heroics of ten syllables each; and so they stand in all the modern editions to this day, although so standing (if the voice attempts to follow the typographical arrangement) they are neither verse nor prose. O Midas! Midas! thy ears were a legacy bequeathed to the braying tribes of critics and of editors! I feel at my own, that I may be sure whether they do not need the crop. Believe me always

Yours very truly,

BYRON.

*LETTER IV.*¹

TO W. WEBSTER, ESQ.

Hastings, August 3, 1814.

My dear Webster,—To-morrow, probably, I shall take leave of my old friend Ocean and proceed to Notts. The review you sent me is one of the dullest. It begins with the striking

¹ To W. Webster, Esq., Long's Hotel, Bond Street, London.—ED.

and new axiom, that 'there is nothing new under the sun;' and, in order to exemplify it, rambles into one of those prosy *nil ad rem* ramifications from the main branch of enquiry, with which the fields of modern criticism, to the infinite joy of the amateurs of siestas and day-dreams, have been exquisitely entangled and prolifically overgrown. For this purpose illustrations of romance, drawn from Pegasus, Perseus, Bellerophon, &c. &c., and as old as the Ark, according to Bryant, are resorted to by way of novelty; and the *oracula decies recocta* of Charlemagne, Bradamonta, Amadis de Gaul, King Arthur, &c. &c., is hashed up for the loathing palate of the public. The scribe of this article, whoever he may be, tells no such truths as that 'false rhymes are a blemish.' He might himself take a respectable canon of criticism from the medical proverb of 'Physician cure thyself.' The second ponderous article may suit the taste of some half-dozen shovel-hats; but the public, who care little for any 'justification' but that of getting money's worth for their six shillings, will gape over the first two pages. The rest I leave to the 'antediluvian whales,' and remain

Yours affectionately,

BYRON.

LETTER V.

TO W. WEBSTER, ESQ.

Piccadilly Terrace, Monday Morning.

My dear W.,—Pray where did you get that Phoenix of a butler?

‘The pimple of his purple nose
Exceeds the royal ruby.’

He is a perambulating epitome of your wine cellar, and does you honour. If the superintendent of the culinary department is a counterpart of the man, you need fear no refusal on my part to dine with you. But, as I am a follower of old Prynne, as regards his ‘*manner of studie*,’ I do not dine—‘*which breaks off one’s fancy, which will not presently be regained*,’ like your ‘*common mortals*;’ but I will try your claret, and may be some fish, or any other light preparation of your subterranean ‘*savant*.’ If that stammering ‘peer of the realm’ dines with you, pray put ‘*a furlong*’ between his lordship and my ‘counterfeit.’ He reminds me of Dr. Darwin, a most notorious stammerer, who used to splutter forth with a sort of triumphant smile, that ‘every b-b-b-b-

M

body might sp-sp-sp-speak p-p-plainly if he
w-w-w-would.

Ever yours very truly,
BYRON.

LETTER VI.

TO W. WEBSTER, ESQ.

Milan, November 1, 1816.

My dear Webster,—Your letter addressed to the care of Mons. Heutsch at Geneva reached me at Milan. I have some remembrance of the circumstances you mention. The whole matter appeared to me a species of diseased consciousness ; ay, as Dr. Johnson would have said, *scrupulosity*. About this same marriage ritual, both on the part of the couples and the clergymen, the scene was laughable enough, at any rate to an unconcerned spectator like *mysen*. The parson screwed his face into a gloomy smile, cast off his holy garb, withheld the pious benediction and amen ; and so, unwedded, left the melancholy pair. The declaration of the husband to the wife, '*with my body I thee worship.*' as the marriage ceremony of the Church of England runs, seems to border closely upon idolatry. Had I met such language in the works of Tom Paine, I should

have inferred that Tom was at his gibes. But there is a faculty in some persons

‘ Who can with ease
Twist words and meanings as they please.’

And I have been told by some of this tribe, that ‘ worship,’ in a canonical sense, may either import *adoration of the Supreme Being*, or *civility and respect to a wife*. If the term has so equivocal a meaning, applicable in a different sense to the Almighty and to a frail creature, ought it not to be expunged from the marriage ritual, to ease the conscience of those who may not, in all instances, have quite refinement enough or subtilty to understand a canonical *double entendre*? In addition to this worship of the lady, she must have a dowry *ad libitum*; that is to say, for so the saying is, she shall be ‘ *endowed with all his worldly goods*,’ notwithstanding that the lawyer, a few hours before churching time, may have taken pretty good care to reserve the most part of such goods for the said husband’s use. Don’t you think that this is, with a witness,

‘ Playing the changes upon cases
As plain as noses upon faces? ’

I shall set out in a few days for Verona and

Venice in company with Hobhouse ; therefore,
direct your letters to Geneva ; they will be for-
warded. Believe me

Ever yours very affectionately,

BYRON.

LETTER VII.

TO W. WEBSTER, ESQ.

Venice, November 9, 1819.

My dear W.,—I am glad you like ‘Donny Johnny.’ Murray says the poem has *not sold well* ; so Murray says ; Galignani tells a different tale. Of all my works ‘D. Juan’ is the most popular in Paris, and sells doubly in proportion, especially among the women, who send for it the more that it is abused. The Don is a sore subject with the *moral* readers of your island, and has been the cause of a great row amongst the Philistines of the ‘*modern Athens*,’ viz. briefless barristers, priests without parishes, physicians without fees, &c. &c. The canting raskals of the ‘*northern metropolis*’ have constituted themselves into a sort of Upper House in the republic of letters. Latterly, however, it would seem, that, under the dingy banner of ‘*the Man of Ebony*,’ an attempt is making to control this self-assured superiority ; and that there are now two literary parties in the ‘in-

tellectual city' opposed to each other in politics, parts, poetry, and presumption. The origin of the contest between the *Blues* of High Street and the *Olives* of Princes Street, as I understand they affect to consider themselves, in *apery* no doubt, for they have no originality of the *blue* and *green* factions of Constantinople in the decline of the empire, is exceedingly diverting. Like man and wife, rail however much they may against each other at home, they make a common cause on the community out of Edinburgh. The *Blues*, the aristocratic Whigs of the Review, with the watchwords *gentility* and *genius*, affect great style and fashion in their '*walk and conversation*,' and 'boast a splendid banquet once a year,' at which the talk is all about *tea-cups* and *Tokay*. For, on these occasions, they are determined '*to sink the shop*.' The *Olives*, who, being Tories by profession, and of course in immediate connection with '*the Archons*' of the modern Athens, are the cocks of the dunghill, whose sweet voices would have thrown Queen Christina into ecstasy. I read the other day a capital story about the '*she-king*' of Sweden, whose *virginity* was probably of the same stamp as that of our own Elizabeth Christina, instead of a nightcap, always enveloped her

head with a towel. One night, being unable to sleep, she ordered music in her chamber, and had the curtains drawn over her bed; but, enchanted with some part of the performance, she thrust her head through the curtains and screamed, '*Mort diable! qu'ils chantent bien.*' The musicians, and especially the eunuchs, were so terrified at her head and nose, that they ran away. My *captain of the horses* is waiting, and I must be off to the Lido, and snuff the Adriatic breezes amongst the *treeeses*. Believe me

Ever yours affectionately,

BYRON.

LETTER VIII.¹

TO SIR JAMES MACKINTOSH.

March, Thor's day, 1815.

My dear Mackintosh,—I return you the *opus*. The author cannot make himself more sure to sink into the sea of oblivion than by tying a heavy load of his own works about his neck: all the corks and bladders he can muster, newspaper puffs, the flattery of admiring friends, and the applause of a coterie, will never save him. His epitaph in our literary annals will be, that he put to sea with a weighty cargo of

¹ To Sir James Mackintosh, Langham Place, London.—ED.

poetry, and was never heard of more. Rhyming is as easy as punning to one who will allow his thoughts to run more by the association of sound than of sense. The universality of these gifts, if all persons were equally ambitious, might produce very serious consequences. Our literature would be drowned by an inundation of poetry. Sometime in the course of his life, under the influence of love, madness, or some other calamity, almost every one is silly enough to sin in rhyme. ‘Scribimus indocti, doctique poemata passim.’ But not every one is so foolish as to publish his sins to the world.

Your ever obliged,

BYRON.

LETTER IX.

TO SIR JAMES MACKINTOSH.

Pisa : February 9, 1822.

My dear Sir James,—I am very grateful for your kind letter. The ancient Fathers held it allowable, and even meritorious, to make use of untruths and fabrications for a pious purpose, and for the conversion of Jews and Infidels—(see Middleton’s ‘Free Inquiry,’ who let the cat out of the bag, and got gloriously clawed for his pains). In this pious purpose their suc-

cessors have not failed. The end has justified and sanctified the means. Witness the number of convenient fabrications of death-bed repentances, more especially the grand one of Voltaire. Doubtless, so soon as Thomas Paine shall have finished his brandy-and-water career, he also will be accommodated. Beside, nothing pays better than labours of this kind; witness Barnel, and other labourers in the holy vineyard. The story of Mallet's butler was purely a fiction of this description, without a single vestige of truth or fact. Somebody has said, *a lie forty years old is as good as a new truth*. The propagators of these stories act upon an established system. The lie makes its *début*, is authentically and utterly disproved, hooted, hissed off the stage of intelligence, damned—no matter, the intelligent are always in a minority, too often a most diminutive one, and their pay and their consequence to the craft in proportion. Millions of gulls are caught, the lie survives, and is periodically republished *pro re natâ*; whilst the refutation is forgotten, there being no pecuniary interest for its revival. ‘Sic crescit gloria mendax.’ I now most humbly and earnestly request that my contemporaries, I mean my survivors, will be pleased to decline to volunteer for my memory in the above mode,

after my final retirement from this mortal stage. Nature speaks confidently in me 'Resurgam!' The better, the ethereal part of me, *cannot* die; but I am most unfashionably unacquainted with all the maps and charts, the great post-roads and inns of the *terra incognita futura*. 'Cain' is nothing more than a drama, *not a piece of argument*. What Calvin says ('the best moral men are as liable to be damned as the worst'), must serve as a consolation to such a sinner as

Your humble servant,

BYRON.¹

LETTER X.²

TO M. DE BOUSTELLEN.

Milan: October 28, 1816.

Dear Sir,—You are right. Man's admiration, like corn, is attainable only by threshing. 'Villanous saltpetre' and Spanish blades have always been productive of glory; but I am of opinion that glory is not worth the saltpetre. Everything is dead-stale and flat since Napoleon

¹ If these letters are forged, the above letter must have been written *con amore* by the ingenious author, though his anticipation of the thorough public refutation has not yet been realised.—ED.

² Monsieur Ch. v. de Boustellen, then at Geneva, Switzerland.—ED.

has left his kingdom a prey to the holy men of the Alliance, who remind me of 'Pompey and Cæsar very much alike, 'specially Pompey.' They have discovered that the Saints are to inherit the world, and that they are the saints. Pray make my thanks acceptable to your friend. I am much pleased with his work, but cannot quite agree with the preface. The noblest tragedy of the noblest of dramatic writers, Sophocles, was written after he had completed his ninetieth year. The 'Paradise Lost' was not the work of Milton's youth, but of those declining days when he was

'With darkness and with danger compassed round ;'

and the powers of Dryden continued to increase to the very ebb of existence. Of his dramas in particular, almost all that are worth reading were written in his old age, and when he was oppressed by neglect and poverty. I shall proceed to Venice in a few days, where letters directed *Poste restante* will reach me. Excuse this hasty scrawl, and believe me

Ever yours sincerely,

BYRON.

LETTER XI.¹

TO MADAME LA BARONNE DE STAEL.

Venice: February 13, 1817.

My dear Madam,—If you have not justified yourself at the expense of your sincerity, it is all very well; but beware of *flattery*!

‘It is a monster that, like jealousy,
Doth make the meat it feeds on.’

The explanation you require is this,

‘The first wrote—wine is the strongest;
The second wrote—the king is the strongest;
The third wrote—women are strongest.’

The third was in the right; neither wine nor the king would have been strong enough to have altered my resolution; but I submit to my *female* conqueror. Yet observe that, in this acquiescence with your pleasure, I am (like our general parent),

‘Not convinced,
But fondly overcome by female charm.’

I yield not to the strength of your reasoning, but to the force of your persuasion; and, now that I no longer *hear* you, am wishing to review

¹ Madame la Baronne de Stael, at Copet, Geneva.—ED.

my intention. 'Of making many books, there is no end; and much study is weariness.' I cannot think of these things, nor of the various experiments which I, like the *Preacher*, have unsuccessfully made to obtain happiness, without drawing the same conclusion, *that all is vanity*. I shall be happy to hear from you again, and beg you to believe me, my dear Madam,

Your much obliged and

Very humble servant,

BYRON.

LETTER XII.¹

TO THE HONOURABLE DOUGLAS KINNAIRD.

Venice: April, 1817.

My dear Douglas,—The review to which you allude is duller than any sermon I remember; and, indeed, what could be expected from a reviewer who tells us he is now 'grey-headed,' and never 'were in love?' Jeffrey does matters differently; he always dishes them up in honey or gall. The arch-critic reminds me of a smelling bottle, dapper and pretty, and filled with an essence pungent and volatile. But I am now critic-proof; for I have left all my gall

¹ To the Honourable Douglas Kinnaird, Pall Mall, London.—ED.

in your island, and nothing can ruffle my philosophy except now and then a woman.

‘If the devil in Styx should in fishing delight,
Let him bait but with woman, by G—d I would
bite.’

What mine critic says about blasphemy is pure nonsense. Blasphemy is by no means original (I wish it were); and, as to *undelicacy*, let the man read the Dutch piece, ‘*The Wedding of Phlous and Rosa*,’ a *favourite* national play, and he will find something more *undelicate*. At weddings it is the custom for the friends of the happy pair to present them with some article of housekeeping, not forgetting the cradle for the children, and pipes and tobacco for the husband, accompanied with an appropriate speech.

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I am well again; my fever is gone, probably because I had no doctor. Let me hear from you.

Ever yours,

BYRON.

LETTER XIII.

TO THE HONOURABLE DOUGLAS KINNAIRD.

Venice: December 5, 1819.

My dear Douglas,—By this time you have got my letters of November. I have made all the preparation requisite for quitting Italy, but my progress will depend on the snows of the Tyrol. Cold water has completely cured my ague. Allegra too is getting stronger. I have to thank you for the books you sent me by Mr. Gardiner. Milman, I see, has been magnoperating Samor, *Lord of the Bright City*, i.e. Gloucester, and not Bunyan's New Jerusalem, as one might possibly suppose. The simplicity of the vicar's poetry has nothing comparable to it in the English language. He begins, by telling us that he was born in the island of Great Britain, an important and highly poetical circumstance; but we have some doubt of its originality, for we recollect that, in the days of our youth, there was a blind Scottish beggar, who began a versified account of himself much in the same manner; he even went farther than Mr. Milman, and sung the character of his parents:—

‘In Grivan I was bred and born,
Within the shire of Ayr;
Of good and honest parents dear,
That took of me great care.’

Proceeding with his heroic poem, the vicar observes, that the rivers of Great Britain do not flow ‘over golden beds,’ which is certainly much to be regretted by every political economist, especially by those who have taken a part in the discussion of the Bullion Question and the Bank Restriction. Then he sings how

‘Forth from the gates of Troynovant hath
past King Vortigern.’

This city has now acquired the name of London.

‘Him the Saxon Hengist met,
And Horsa.

But the king and chiefs, instead of shaking hands, shook their heads at one another, and, shaking their heads, ‘*they shook their saffron hair.*’ Here we must convict the vicar of a palpable plagiarism. The magnificent incident of Vortigern, Hengist, and Horsa shaking their heads, is an evident imitation of Homer’s celebrated description of Jupiter’s nod. But this, perhaps, proves the classical attainments of the author, and shows that, if he does borrow, he

borrows with the hand of a master ; for Jupiter's being black, the vicar gives the king and the two generals all saffron hair. Mr. Milman's muse, I fear, is what Shakspeare calls, '*a red-haired wench*.'

Yours ever,

BYRON.

LETTER XIV.

TO THE HONOURABLE DOUGLAS KINNAIRD.

Ravenna : April 11, 1820.

Dear Douglas,—I received your letter and enclosures. No news from the British Parnassus? a region from which we have long been wishing for authentic despatches. I hear nothing except what Galignani tells me, and that is a grievous tale of tyranny, because an accident happened to occur the other day, by a horse taking fright at the squeaking of *Mr. Punch*. Some of those strait-waistcoat-mongers are for having our merry old friend put down by Act of Parliament, an '*act of police*!' For our part we do not see any reason why a new gagging-bill should be framed to stop the mouth of this legitimate descendant of the sacred drama. We would have Pontius Pilate (especially as the Pope himself and all his cardinals have been pleased to spare him ; and the very Puritans

could not quite knock the brains out of his mirthmaking wooden skull!) We would have him still play off his traditionary tricks to the end of time, without let, suit, or hindrance, either from the legislators of St. Stephen's, or the beadles of St James; maugre all the *startlish bits of blood*, which the former may occasionally bestride, or all the magisterial authority the latter may be so fond of showing. I have a sort of constitutional affection for Mr. Punch, and think him quite as entertaining, and nearly as rational, a buffoon as those whom we go occasionally with wives, and daughters in their best bibs and tuckers, to be amused with in our great theatres, or as those even who sometimes exhibit in still higher and still graver places. I don't see why the poor penny or penny-less children should not have their theatre of three feet square, to amuse them in the streets, as well as the opulent grown babies of either sex should have theirs in the great area of Drury-lane. I am getting '*salvage*.' Let the old noodles beware lest I borrow Mr. Punch's potent cudgel. Mr. Punch is as legitimate as any one of the enthroned numskulls, for whose defence a thousand dirty pens would have flown from their stand, and stood like a porcupine before the snarling noses of the curs who first invaded

the divine rights of monarchs and the church. What about the investments in Ireland? Write soon, for, like Dugald Dalgetti and his horse, I may take a turn with the natives.

Ever yours, &c. &c.

BYRON.

LETTER XV.

TO THE HONOURABLE DOUGLAS KINNAIRD.

Ravenna: August, 1820.

Dear Douglas,—Taking my seat, not in the House of ‘Lordships,’ the other day I discovered a sheet or two of English literature, having the title of ‘Benjamin the Waggoner—a righte merrie and conceited tale in verse.’ Like his namesake of old, Benjamin the Waggoner had a narrow escape from the ‘*pit*,’ but, somewhat less fortunate than the hero of the patched coat, he only gained a short respite. This ‘*poeshie*’ is intended as a quiz upon that poor Lakish poet, ycleped Wordsworth; but there was no need of any such fooling as this.

Curdsworth, the great metaquizzical poet,
A man of great merit amongst those who know it;
Of whose works, as I told Moore last autumn, at
Mestri,
I owe all I know to my passion for pastry

has rendered himself sufficiently ridiculous; besides, the talents of *our author*, whatever his taste may be, do not fit him to attempt mimicry of this kind. He should recollect that mimicry is a peculiar *forte*, and that it is necessary for the mimic to show that he is superior to his original. It is a pity that so much ingenuity should have been wasted on the nonsensical quackery of the *Wild Ducks* of the Lake. In my last letter, I desired you to despatch Messrs. Money, Cash & Co.: on their arrival I promise them a Highland welcome on the part of my friends—*The Carbonics*. Adieu!

Ever yours,

BYRON.

LETTER XVI.

TO THE HONOURABLE DOUGLAS KINNAIRD.

Ravenna: May 5, 1821.

My dear Douglas,—If there be bitterness in *these* lines, it is because my soul is full of bitterness. I would revise, and endeavour to mitigate my phrases, did I not dread that, in reviewing the topics they refer to, my feelings might compel me to give them even a yet more bitter expression.

Sonneteer Bowles, who in all his ministrations to the Muses has shown his invariable

propensity to sweeten cream and water with sugarcandy, and call it the stream of Helicon, is only a centuno of that legion of poets who look upwards every year from the Bœotian levels towards the lofty summits of Parnassus, and involve with bribes a gale of inspiration from the Muse; but it blows over their heads, decomposing as it passes, and only the heavier elements of formal syllable and mechanic metres reward the suppliant's prayer. Perhaps, however, the solution is easy. Neither their pursuits, nor the associations of their dull life, are favourable to the development of poetic genius. In your English atmosphere there is nothing that gives spring and elasticity to the heart, to the imagination, to the thrilling sympathies and kindling ecstasies, without which verses may indeed be made, but poesy is *not*. The Muse delights to breathe a freer air. Bowles has by this time discovered at last, that blank verse *is* at once the most difficult, and *ought to be* the most perfect of all versifications. *Every* line must be good. Nor is this enough! every successive line, or nearly so, must also be varied in its cadences and its pauses. It must be music, perpetually varying, and perpetually appropriate. After indulging which *natural* but melancholy reflection on Bowles, you may,

if you deem meet, beg. Stop! don't; you had better *borrow* (it is not worth stealing) the Parson's book. Write soon, and believe me,

In sober sadness, yours sincerely,

BYRON.

LETTER XVII.

TO THE HONOURABLE DOUGLAS KINNAIRD.

Ravenna: May 12, 1821.

My dear Douglas,—It is now nearly a century since the appearance of the 'Dunciad.' Its heroes have been long forgotten, but their race is not yet extinct. The dunces of the present day are eager to avenge the discomfiture of their ancestors; and, in proof of the system of Mr. Malthus, the hungry swarm appear to be continually increasing in a geometrical progression. The system of warfare too, as well as the character of the combatants, is naturally different. It is not against Pope alone that their hostilities are directed. They are revolutionary Vandals in the region of poetry, and would strip the Temple of Fame of almost all those venerable statues which have so long been dear to the Muses. Surely another Dunciad will soon be a desideratum to commemorate the new labours of the choice spirits and small

gentlemen wits of the present day. What Pope said of women is certainly true of the Lakers and the rest of the modern sonnetteers ; most of them *have no character at all*. The Rev. detractor of the poetical as well as personal fame of Pope deserves to be dissolved in the Laureate's '*poetical decompositions*,' alias hexameters. But enough of Bowles and 'Naturals!' 'Long life to ye, Parson!' as Pat says. Apropos! if you have a mind to live long and renew your youth, come and settle in these regions. Not long ago there died in this neighbourhood a farmer who was 105 years of age. By his first wife he had thirty children, ten by his second, and four by his third ; his youngest son was 81 years younger than his eldest ; and 800 persons, descended from him, followed his body to the grave! There is '*a man of parts*' for you! his first wife must have been a very profitable vessel. I wish you all prosperity, and am

Ever yours,

BYRON.

LETTER XVIII.

TO THE HONOURABLE DOUGLAS KINNAIRD.

Ravenna : August 23, 1821.

My dear Douglas,—What does Murray mean? Respond—explain—expectorate! It is probable

that Tonson gained ten times more by his government appointment than by Dryden, Addison, and Pope; and that his profits from these were sunk by his unavoidable speculations with less popular writers. Does Murray insinuate as much? Publishers, from habit, acquire the same feelings towards their clients which lawyers, surgeons, and butchers acquire towards their professional objects. But take a care, Monsieur Moray! you are not permitted to say '*we keeps a poet.*'

Respecting that rascally agent, whose dialect was not quite as '*the Muses love,*' I have only to say that I suppose I must be satisfied with his 'natural' explanatory note which beats nature naturally. When a writer, who had submitted his production to the inspection of Voltaire, contended, in defence of some passage which the latter censured as *low*, that it was *natural*, the wit replied, '*Avec permission, monsieur, mes jambes sont bien naturelles, et cependant je porte des culottes.*' Now that *ere* disciple of 'Old Ebony' would do well in future, if he cares for his ass' skin, to clothe his words in a decent pair of breeches. 'Tis the middle of night by the castle clock, and—&c. &c. Never mind. I have written to Murray our magnifico. If he wants a row with

me he shall have it. Don't be too sparing with your ink. Write soon.

Ever yours,

BYRON.¹

LETTER XIX.

TO THE HONOURABLE DOUGLAS KINNAIRD.

Ravenna: August, 1821.

Dear Douglas,—I take example from the conciseness of your letters to shorten mine. Though, to say truth, nothing occurs at present that can tempt one to lengthen them. We have, it is true, a very powerful body of conspirators in this remote part of the world, ready to blow up the *autres chiens*. But I have no mind to graft the thick skulls of these Goths who open all letters. All the hopes of the Liberals are now placed upon me! therefore, your worship will not neglect to replenish my breeches' pockets, which are empty; their contents having taken the shape of sundry warlike stores, such as powder and lead, bayonets and small arms, and in case any misfortune (which the Gods avert!) should attend our arms, my funds must facilitate the escape of my valiant

¹ Passages in the above letter are altered without apology.—ED.

friends. Be assured that the hopes of the Republic are wholly fixed upon you and your strong box ; therefore comply as promptly as feasible with my humble requests, and I shall look upon your worship as a *truly great man*. Let this animate you to noble achievements, and believe me, most trustworthy sir,

Your lovinge freinde,

BYRON.

LETTER XX.

TO THE HONOURABLE DOUGLAS KINNAIRD.

Ravenna : August, 1821.

My dear Douglas,—We have no very great objections either to booksellers or authors ‘catching a penny’ by *amusing* the public, even if they catch their pence by *abusing* us. The goodly brotherhood of the *Quarterlyers* may sound the trumpet of that oracle of oracles ‘Robert Southey, Esq., LL.D., Poet Laureate, Honorary Member of the Royal Spanish Academy, &c. &c. &c. ;’ their phonetic exertions cannot produce an echo on this side of the Alps. My friends, the Carbonics, too, get a taste of quarterly philosophy ; their schemes of government are represented as being capable of producing nothing but impracticability, ‘Only to see,’ as Touchstone says, ‘how a man may

live and learn!’ Producing *impracticability!!* Truly this is a very new and marvellous species of production. I should like to know to what genus, class, or order it belongs; and whether to the animal, vegetable, or mineral kingdom. The very witches of ‘Macbeth’ could only make themselves—air! . . . To have made impracticability even, they must have taken lessons in the occult philosophy of Quarterly Reviewers. These sapient knights of the quill tell us plainly enough, in divers places, that the Holy Allies, and the whole brood of legitimate royalty, are the holiest of holies—all candour, fair dealing, and benevolence. That ‘they have not, it is true, at present granted constitutions’ (as they promised to do, when they wanted their subjects’ help!) which ‘those who imagine that constitutions can be made and adopted as fast as coats and waistcoats, reproach them for not having done’—(I should have thought that in the eight years which have elapsed since the promises of 1814, a pair of breeches even might have been added to the bargain!) yet that they are constantly and benignantlly employed in doing the business in a much better way, in accomplishing for the people everything which the people are incapable of doing for themselves. Sunburn their impudence! Impracticability!

Had not the intrigues of perjured royalty, the diplomacy of Holy Allies, and the gold of France, or of that most royally and christianly benevolent of all Jews, Mr. Rothschild, more to do in this marvellous production of impracticability?

Pope Quarterly is prating mightily in his infallibility about all those who repose upon any other faith than his own, if one could but find out *what that* is. I should be much obliged to the reviewers if they would favour me with the articles of their own orthodox faith; or, at least, refer me to the particular pages, either of their oracular review, or the equally oracular sermons (some beautiful specimens only of which are to be found in the authentic pages of one of the early inspirations) of a member of the infallible fraternity, '*the Book of Wat Tyler*;' and I assure their infallibilities that, whatever their sole—or soul—saving creed may be, I will do my best, *willy nilly*, with all my might, and without one scrupulous particle of the vanity of reason or philosophy, to believe every syllable of it.

Perhaps in my next epistle I may be able to give you an account of a drubbing of the Goths. Half-past two of the clock. Good-morrow to you!

Ever yours,

BYRON.

LETTER XXI.

TO THE HONOURABLE DOUGLAS KINNAIRD.

Ravenna: October 25, 1821.

My dear Douglas,—

‘We’ll institute new arts, unknown before,
To vary plagues, and make them look like new
ones.’

Thus singeth Otway; and thus thinketh ‘mine critic,’ the long-winded customer of the *Quarterlyers*. Were I not too lazy or indifferent I would amply reimburse the coin. It’s lucky though for the man that my Pegasus prefers the *dolce far niente* of these regions, else the old goose-quill might be kicked to the further extremity of ——. But I am growing old—heigho!—and too good-natured for mine enemies, I have taken to the philosophy of that truly great man, Diogenes, who beat the Jew king in everything except in concubines. I have sipped knowledge and drank claret; I have loved and rhymed in my time; I have been a traveller and a recluse when it suited me; I have served mankind and womankind too, and bought a pennyworth of salvation now and

then, and what has been my fate? Friends deserted me, women proved false; the only men who stuck to me like pitch were the parsons; they remained true to their religion—cant and hypocrisy; they never would suffer me to save my soul in my own way; they persecuted me when living, they will excommunicate me after death. But never mind. ‘I will turn their flanks yet.’ Sometimes I am weary of my path, which I find strewn with flints and thorns. I have sought rest everywhere, but I have found it nowhere; for, like Petrarch, ‘I have travelled always with myself.’ I will change my style, and, like an epilogue after a moving piece, divert you with a *bon mot* of Marshal Turenne, who said to the German deputies offering him a hundred thousand crowns on condition that he would not march his army through their territory: ‘As your town is not on the route which I intend to take, I cannot in conscience accept the money you offer.’ Now, the moral of this is, ‘As my ideas of money transactions march in another direction from the one you point out, I cannot in conscience take your offer.’ Pray apply to Marshal or Corporal Hanson for an interpretation or explanation; it is all ‘*hoptional*,’ as Liston says. Wishing your worship

health, life, and the entire catalogue of earthly bliss, I remain

Your loving friend,

BYRON.

LETTER XXII.

TO THE HONOURABLE DOUGLAS KINNAIRD.

Pisa : April 14, 1822.

Dear Douglas,—The devil take the printer's devil—he has paid no attention to the proofs. It matters not how much, or how little, a book-seller knows of what he is to sell, his want of knowledge hurts no one except himself; but a book printer cannot be ignorant without mischief to the author that is passing through his hands. There are some—friends to ignorance in general—who fancy that a printer who can only read, without understanding, is more likely to be correct than one who comprehends what he puts together. But this prejudice may be expected to go out of fashion with wigs and chancery suits. Pray send no more books; I have no mind to read at present. My *English* studies are confined to 'Galighani's Messenger' and (excuse the Irishism) to Voltaire's philosophical dictionary, which I have borrowed, not stolen. 'A book,' says Goldsmith, 'may be amusing with numerous errors,

or it may be very dull without a single absurdity.' The scribblers of the present day in England are both dull and full of absurdity. If Voltaire's writings are not solid gold, they are at least so well gilt as to be highly attractive; and if he made general war on all prejudices, so as to create a too general reaction, he assailed many of those monsters which ought to be destroyed. Plain, Protestant readers should bear in mind that Voltaire's jokes about religion were, for the most part, directed against Catholic 'mummeries' and miracles. Offences against established opinions are no longer punished as formerly. Instead of the rude machinery of ancient tyranny—inquisitions, tortures, and massacres—magazines, reviews, and newspapers have been instituted as the more effective guardians of intolerance and abuse. It was only a clumsy work to sacrifice whole sects and parties to the Moloch of Orthodoxy, or any other *doxy*. The present practice of stifling useful truths by destroying the credit of their authors, with imputations of *immorality* and *impiety*, is more refined. This is the way of acting of the *northern Areopagus*. Let me know how matters stand, and pray—give the devil a kick.

Ever yours,

BYRON.

LETTER XXIII.

TO THE HONOURABLE DOUGLAS KINNAIRD.

Pisa : May 18, 1822.

My dear Douglas,—You want to know how I fare? I am in tolerable plight; and in my last letter I told you what I had done in the way of all rhyme. You consider the lines I sent you a hit? The *Gally Knight* would think so too. There is nothing good or respectable about him except his income, and there the respectability of the old noodle ends. You say, ‘That’s breaking a butterfly upon the wheel!’ but really, if a butterfly happen to be so enormously out of proportion as to spread his wings over fifteen whole sheets of demy, one may sometimes be excused for throwing a hat at him. An old friend—the Laureate, I see, turns up with an odd, rambling kind of article about ‘*Astrology and Alchemy*’ and Francis Moore’s ‘*Loyal Almanack*.’ I wonder what the *Doctor* will turn to at last. Does he consider a belief in divination, fortune-telling, and witchcraft necessary to the complete re-establishment of ‘*social order*?’ The following is a sample of the stuff he has raked out of Old Nixon’s and Mother Shipton’s prophecies:—

‘When the bear is muzzled and cannot byte,
And the hors is fettered and cannot stryke,
And the swanne is sicke and cannot swymme,
Then shall the splay-foot England winne!’

There is rubbish for ye. Philosophy is at a discount. For this fact we have in addition, the high legal authority of a London Recorder. When this Lord High *Fortune-teller*—as he was called at the Old Bailey—was one day laudably employed in putting down a philosophical society, a worthy alderman asked him what *philosophy* was, fearing, no doubt, that it might be some illicit drug for adulterating porter, or, at least, a dangerous innovation in the kitchen. ‘Why,’ replied his sable lordship, ‘modern philosophy is so frittered away that it is difficult to say *what it is!*’ One of the clock, P. midnight, and I must get me to bed; this is my *philosophy*, strengthened by a tumbler of something stronger than tea. A good night to your worship!

BYRON.

LETTER XXIV.

TO THE HONOURABLE DOUGLAS KINNAIRD.

Pisa: August 27, 1822.

My dear Douglas,—That d——d Watkins has about ten lies in ten pages. Shall I publish

my own memoirs to counteract the fellow? I don't mind his telling lies about myself, but why does he mention the women of whom he knows nothing? Lady C. has sent me a most savage letter in reply to the one I desired you to forward to her. To use the language of her ladyship, 'I solemnly disclaim every idea of goading her feelings by my observations.' If in some parts it bears hard upon her gentle form, she provoked the pressure by keen though feeble defiance; and I have been more severe than I otherwise should have been, from a *solemn* conviction that she is a stranger to the sensations arising from active benevolence, and a consciousness of ever having promoted the happiness of a fellow-creature.

The love affair you allude to I recollect perfectly well. It created at the time a good deal of merriment in certain private circles. The facts were these: the learned judge gave way to his amorous disposition in his way home from court. He called on the lady by appointment, whose husband was from home. He had frequently made advances to her, but this was their first private meeting. Her ladyship's French Abigail led the way to her mistress's closet and withdrew. The preliminaries were soon adjusted, and the happy

couple proceeded to the ratification; when suddenly, in the midst of their happiness, a rapping at the closet door threw them into the utmost discomposure. The same moment the female Mercury of her ladyship rushed in, *sans cérémonie*, and, undismayed by the situation in which she discovered the lovers, announced her master's approach, who was even then on the stairs. Not a moment remained for invention to have scope, and in ten seconds my lord, who was pretty nimble on these occasions, made a spring into the garden, and escaped from the husband's resentment.¹ My horses are waiting. I therefore conclude, and *sto sempre*,

Your worship's

Umilissimo servitore,

BYRON.

LETTER XXV.

TO THE HONOURABLE DOUGLAS KINNAIRD.

Genoa: X^{bre} 8, 1822.

Dear Douglas,—‘Defend us from our friends;’ the proverb is a little musty, but very appropriate. The rupture was caused by such

¹ The story is in reference to a similar one in ‘Don Juan.’—ED.

passions as are usually ascribed to the grim personage called the devil, and mischief could not fail to be the result. The amiable couple were *paired* but not *matched*. A Persian poet singeth, 'When thou art married, seek to please thy wife; but listen not to all she says. From man's right side a rib was taken to form the woman, and never was there seen a rib quite straight, and would'st thou straighten it? It breaks but bends not. Since then it is plain that crooked is woman's temper,' &c. &c. &c. I remember the following quaint passage in a very old copy of a work on necromancy. Question, 'How to raise a devil?' Answer, 'Contradict your wyffe.' Our friend has found out the '*probatum est*' He is no beauty, but as lame as myself; still he contrives to find now and then a spare rib, besides his legitimate one. What a comfort to a cripple! In your dreadfully moral country people do things which are damned in *immoral* Italy. . . . Poor Kitty is so much annoyed at being put down as a reader of 'D. Juan,' that she has written a long and rather ingenious letter on the subject. If those men, 'hot from kirk, and breathing nothing but piety and whisky punch,' continue to preach down the Don, I shall—grow fat—and shall make another deep dip into my inkstand.

‘Visions of Omar crowd not on my soul!’

With this comfortable hope we bid your honour adieu!

Yours,

BYRON.

LETTER XXVI.

TO THE HONOURABLE DOUGLAS KINNAIRD.

Genoa: February 9, 1823.

Dear Douglas,—Pray induce *Monsieur Moray* to get *his lordship's* works printed by John Johnson, printer, or, as he styles himself, typographer; certainly a much higher designation than the humble word printer, two feet higher, and that's no slight matter in these ambitious days, when dancing masters, hairdressers, and *id omne genus*, are professors. His press is the Apollo press, Holborn! But, alas! that villanous Holborn spoils all. Apollo in Holborn! We should as soon expect to meet a dowager-duchess in Dyot Street; there is no keeping in the thing. Perhaps the ‘*sweet voice*’ of John Murray is *powerful* enough to persuade the said John Johnson, typographer, to emigrate with ‘*Apollo his press*’ to the more divine regions about Grosvenor Square. Amongst some waste paper I discovered the other day a specimen of

the said typographer's art, the subject being, 'The *fifteene joyes of Marryage*' (just fourteen more than I have been able to discover), the author who singeth thus—

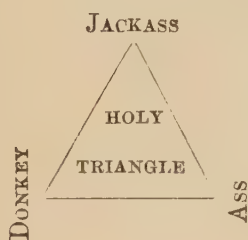
'Somer passed, and wynter well begone,
The dayes short, the darke nyghtes longe
Have taken season, and bryghtness of the sonne,
To lytell sene, &c. &c. &c.'

has been no '*lytell*' fortunate in discovering fifteen connubial blisses. His discovery beats that of Cristopher Columbo — The affairs of Italy, under the auspices of the Holy Alliance, look gloomy. One is sickened at the details of these enormities, and yet it is salutary to peruse them in order to infer hope from despair. The reaction that such a system of violence must eventually produce cannot be distant. Extreme measures, instead of being to be depreciated, are rather to be desired on the part of the *Holy Triumvirs*, for the more inveterately they close the steam-valve of augmenting intellect, the more quickly will the suppressing power be blown to atoms by the mental energy which it imprisons. The historical Clytemnestra does not sleep for ever — Having said enough of the political philosophy (or philoso—*fy*, as Vanbushel would have orthoëpised it) of the

Holy Triangle, I will get me to bed —
Wishing your honour good night!

Yours,

BYRON.



LETTER XXVII.

TO J. HOPNER, ESQ.¹

Venice: November 28, 1818.

My dear Sir,—On my return from the Armenian Convent, I found your note and the books. You need offer no apology, for you are quite right in pointing out to me the mistake; and moreover, to disregard your voice would rather tell against me; besides, my betters have all been laborious correctors of their works. *Hume* spent years in improving and polishing his Essays, which nevertheless would seem, from the perspicuous simplicity of their style, to have been written with very little effort. *Robertson* is said to have composed his histories on small slips of paper, and to have perfected each

¹ English Consul at Venice.—ED.

sentence before he proceeded to a new one. *Rousseau* tells us in his 'Confessions,' that he always transcribed several times whatever he intended for the press; and that the 'Nouvelle Heloise,' the most eloquent and beautiful of all his works, was frequently copied by him for the perusal of his friends and patrons before it was published. *Burke* too, the Cicero of our age, was careful, almost to fastidiousness, in the correction of his writings. His letter to the Duke of Bedford, consisting of only a few sheets, was three months in the press, and was so often altered by him during that time, that the expense of printing it amounted to ten times more than it would have cost if it had been printed without alteration. I could add the names of many other writers. I shall take the earliest opportunity of returning the books.

Believe me, always yours,

BYRON.

LETTER XXVIII.

TO J. HOPPNER, ESQ.

Ravenna: April 24, 1820,
1 o'clock, P.M.

My dear Sir,—No Sphynx will kill herself in despair at the brilliant elucidations of the Vienna *Cædipus Metternich*. . . . They *be*

rogues, these cabinet men. The Holy Alliance will have an opportunity at present for the exertion of its pious and benignant energies, and the three heads of the Cerberus of Despotism may, perhaps ere long, find occasion to snarl and growl at each other, if not to bite. Greece and Turkey, Spanish pretensions and South American independence, are subjects upon which they may fall out. We are on the verge of a row *here*. All the city walls have been charcoaled with 'Up with the Republic!' and *Death to the Pope!* and from the number of inscriptions the republican painters must have been all night about it. All the palaces are covered with '*Death to Popes and Priests!*' In addition to this there is '*Down with the Nobility!*' They are down enough already, some flat on their noses—a position in which I would rather see the *Holy Triumvirs*, and especially the arch-Goth who lords it over the Austrians, *diaboli gratia*, hereditary emperour. Umph! Fletcher—not Fletcher the learned, but *Andrew Fletcher*, whose principle led him to oppose the Merry Monarch, invade King James, and object to the giving of so much power to King William the Third, showed the absurdity of hereditary pretensions. Being in company one day with the witty Dr. Pitcairn, the conversation turned upon

a person of learning whose history was not distinctly known. 'I knew the man well,' said Fletcher; 'he was hereditary professor of divinity at Hamburgh.' '*Hereditary professor?*' said Pitcairn, with a laugh of astonishment and derision. 'Yes, doctor,' replied Fletcher, '*hereditary* professor of divinity—what think you of an hereditary *King?*' If there be a row in Italy, I dont know that I wont have a finger in it. Does the spirit move the Venetians? They ought to give the Austrians a ducking; the Adriatic is inviting enough for so noble a purpose. Pray don't forget '*Manton's powder;*' but unless you feel sure of getting it away from your place without seizure I wont have it risked. I hope Mrs. H. is well, and the little boy. Believe me always,

Yours very truly,

BYRON.

LETTER XXIX.

TO J. HOPPNER, ESQ.

Ravenna: May 27, 1820.

My dear Hoppner,—I have to thank you for the paper. There is nothing new under the sun ; nay, under the moon neither. Orthodoxy, heterodoxy, and all other doxies and *ox-ies*

are in harness. Let them bray and be d——d !
 Sleek Sir Harry ! saint with the chill off ! Sir,
 sir ! you are one of those that won't serve
 God, if the devil bid you. Politics would
 become becalmed were it not for religion and
 the spirit of *brotherly* love. Those who declare
 that their kingdom is not of this world are
 striving to divide the world amongst them ;
 they have discovered that the Saints are to
 inherit the earth, and that *they are* the saints.
 Stupid fanaticism and wooden-headed bigotry.¹

* * * * *
 * * * * *

You need not forward *the stuff* which was
 sent from England. Doctors are *quacks*, but
 Apollodorus puts all these quacking vendors
 of patent medicines to shame. All that their
 infallible elixirs profess, is to restore the func-
 tions of nature, and thus prevent a man from
 dying ; but he mentions a plant whose sovereign
 efficacy is such, that a *dead body* being rubbed
 with it, the anointed would start into renewed
 life. This far surpasses the sage devices of the
 worthy Humane Society ! —— With my best
 wishes for Mrs. H., I remain

Yours very truly,

BYRON.

¹ Here follow lines which 'tis better to omit.—ED.

LETTER XXX.

TO J. HOPPNER, ESQ.

Ravenna: June 5, 1821.

My dear Sir,—I am glad you like my letter. If Pope produced the best mock heroic, he is still more entitled to the character of the first English satirist, who combined the playful ease and elegance of Horace with the fire and vehemence of Juvenal, and the abrupt boldness of Persius. In his moral epistles and his philosophical poem on ‘Man,’ he discovers a quick insight into the motives and feelings of our species, which he explains and elucidates in the clearest and happiest manner. It is amusing to perceive how his various editors differ and contradict each other in their opinions of his defects and merits; insomuch that there is scarcely any quality, however high, for which he has not full credit from one or the other, and no fault of which he is not acquitted by inference or recantation in the end. Take for instance Warton, who asserted that Pope wanted dignity and elevation of poetic character; and afterwards quoted the following lines, from the ‘*Essay on Man*,’ in order to prove the contrary, and to admit that he had been mistaken.

‘ All are but parts of one stupendous whole,
Whose body nature is, and God the soul,
That chang’d thro’ all, and yet in all the same,
Great in the earth as in the ethereal frame,
Warms in the sun, refreshes in the breeze,
Flows in the stars, and blossoms in the trees,
Lives thro’ all life, extends thro’ all extent,
Spreads undivided, operates unspent,
Breathes in our soul, informs our mortal part,
As full as perfect in a hair as heart,
As full as perfect in vile man that mourns,
As the rapt seraph that adores and burns ;
To Him, no high, no low, no great, no small—
He fills, he bounds, connects, and equals all.’¹

In justice to Pope I must observe that, in regard to variety and extent of genius, embracing almost every species of composition, in more elevated and sustained powers of thought, and a wider play of imagination, his muse mounted on a stronger pinion than that of Boileau your favourite. You have not acknowledged Moore’s lines, which I sent enclosed in my last epistle. With my respects to your lady, I am

Yours sincerely, BYRON.

¹ The Pantheistic philosophy of Pope is manifested in these lines. Lord Byron’s theories found an echo here.—ED.

LETTER XXXI.¹

TO THE RIGHT HON. LORD HOLLAND.

Venice: X^{bre} 29, 1819.

My dear Lord Holland,—I will send the documents you desire in a few days. I have been at Bologna and Ferrara. At the latter place I saw the original manuscripts of Ariosto and Tasso, with the tomb of the former; his chair, his 'scrutoire, and modest looking chamber. I also viewed with indignation the little frightful cell wherein Tasso was immured. This quondam habitation of the poet has much the air of a den of wild beasts. With the demand of Lady Holland, I 'must' be so unpolite as to decline compliance. I am not in a mood for '*transmutation*;' besides, Petrarch's sonnets require a careful fit, and I am out of measure. The charm of all poetry depends so essentially on the selection and arrangements of words, that the most felicitous translations can do little more than present similar ideas under a totally different form. More especially is this true of the Italian sonnet, a light and elegant composition, the beauty of which results entirely from its construction, and which, in the hands of an

¹ To the Right Honourable Lord Holland, Holland House, London.—ED.

Ultramontanist, shares the fate of the butterfly in the gripe of a clown. The Italians assert that the verses of Petrarch have a high claim to admiration as effusions of genuine feeling ; but, from their opinion, Sismondi has with great modesty, and as I think with great justice, expressed his dissent. It is not the nature of genuine passion to indulge in those quaint conceits, extravagant metaphors, and verbal puns, with which those celebrated productions abound ; and were there no other evidence of the existence of Laura than what they contain, I should certainly class her with the fictitious divinities, the *Celias* and *Delias* of other professors of the *Ars poetica*. It is also not a little surprising, that the influence of this '*Angel ever bright and fair*' should have been insufficient to preserve her enraptured admirer from that of nymphs of frailer mould, by whom he had several illegitimate children. I am not sure that, as a lyric poet, Petrarch may not rival the Greeks. If Dante is most distinguished by genius, Boccaccio by nature and humour, Petrarch has certainly the most claims to elegance ; and if the perusal of their works should suggest a superiority of mental power on the part of the two former, the benefits arising from it to society cannot, for a moment, be put in competition with those

resulting from the long, the active, the useful life of the latter. My remembrances to Lady H. Let me hear from you when convenient, and believe me to be,

My dear Lord Holland,

Ever yours,

BYRON.

LETTER XXXII.¹

TO W. J. BANKES, ESQ.

Ravenna: February 28, 1820.

My dear Bankes,—Have the daughters of Bologna captivated you as well as the ‘*mother*’ (on canvass) you intend to take home with you? I should suppose this to be the case, judging from your prolonged stay in the city of ‘*sarsages*,’ as the Cockneys would say. There are some fine heads in the Bolognese galleries, but I know nothing of pictures myself, and care almost as little. I believe I am a better connoisseur of horse-flesh, and, maybe, *woman-flesh* too, though I have been taken in once or twice by jockeys in petticoats as well as by those wearing breeches. Amongst the Ravennese you will find some very handsome women. A man from the banks of the Tweed

¹ To W. J. Bankes, Esq., Poste restante, Bologna.—ED.

was so enraptured the other day as to burst out—

‘Her ’prentice hand she tried on man,
And then she made the lasses, O!’

In sad soberness, or sober sadness, be that as it may, whether the history of Father Rib be true or not, they have evidently caused more pain to the sides of men than Father Adam experienced in furnishing the material. But that is abundantly compensated by their delightful *naïveté*. It is worth your while to see this dreadfully moral place; besides, we are going to have a row here. The Holy Alliance has no appearance of the slightest tendency to relinquish any portion of their design of harmonising the whole polity and condition of the world according to their own legitimate scale, though Greece and South America seem to intrude some awkward crotchets in their way. With compliments from the fair Goths of this city, as well as Dante, and the Ghost of the Pineta, I conclude this scrawl, and remain,

Always yours, very affectionately,

BYRON.

LETTER XXXIII.

TO W. J. BANKES, ESQ.

Pisa : August 27, 1822.

My dear Bankes,—‘At this particular season of the year, when,’ &c. &c., as the advertisement of ‘Steer’s Opodeldoc’ hath it, the Edinburgh—that High Pope Literary, or guide infallible to library collections and youthful study—oracularly pronounces that, ‘In short, to *think* or *speak* (of the effusions of Lord Byron) were a species of stultification.’ Is that not exceedingly edifying? If that is not personal—nay *personalest*—I will consent to be drowned in a hogshead of ‘*sack*.’ What do ye say to that? The old Scotch fiddle is almost as bad as old Dennis, the Jeffery of Queen Anne’s time, who said of Pope, ‘One would swear that this youngster had espoused some antiquated Muse who had sued out a divorce from some superannuated sinner upon account of impotence, and who, being poor by the former spouse, had got the gout in her decrepit age, which makes her hobble so d——y.’ This is pretty plain criticism. The man has no ‘*scrupulosity*’ (as Dr. Johnson

¹ To W. J. Bankes, Esq., then at Soughton Hall, Northop, N.W.—ED.

would have said) about it. Your long silence induces the belief that you, too, consider thinking of or writing to me a species of stultification. But never mind; it's all '*hoptional*,' as Liston says. I had, and still have, thoughts of Columbia, but am fluctuating between it and Greece. However, love is little compatible with glory; and as I do not wish to expose the Countess Gi. to a long voyage, and a residence in an unsettled country, I shall remain for the present in these regions. If I change my mind, I shall take lessons in geography of you who have been a traveller in all sorts of '*spheres*.' I have lately made it my study. One is never too old to learn; however, the race of the Bourbons think differently. Salute friends, write soon, and believe me

Yours truly and affectionately,

BYRON.

LETTER XXXIV.

TO W. J. BANKES, ESQ.

Genoa: April 5, 1823.

My dear Bankes,—Neither Columbia nor '*Mosquito*' will do. The true state of this *terra australis incognita*, of which, like Swift's *Lord Peter*, '*his highness has pleased to make a market*,' and the entire precious imposture

has been laid open. Besides, the disclaimer of the alleged cession of the country by the real 'Simon Pure, the Cacique George Augustus Frederic, there is now a claim on the part of Mexico. I shall remain, at least for the present, in this country, were it only to see how far the tyranny of the Holy Alliancers will enforce belief in their divine right,

'In proving doctrines orthodox
By apostolic blows and knocks ;'

and, what amounts to the same thing,

'By apostolic bars and locks,'

by dungeons and penalties, and the inquisitions of perverted law. I trust that the people will not move a jot, but stand boldly, like Homer's ass did, in spite of the shower of sticks and stones, though, like the ass, they possess not the sweet motive of '*being in clover*' to stand still. The assertion that 'the Bourbons neither learnt nor forgot anything in exile,' I can prove to be false, for they did learn to eat off porcelain! I read only the other day extracts from the memoirs of some member of the Bourbon family—another testimony to the autobiographical talents of that race—and of the royal good taste and skill with which they can appeal to the sympathies of the world on such direful

calamities as being 'actually reduced to the necessity of occasionally eating off china'—an extremity which is thus touchingly recorded: 'This was the first time that a daughter of the King of Spain—accustomed to be served in gold and silver—saw herself obliged to eat off porcelain.' I vaticinate a greater misfortune should that same race once more 'leave their country for their country's good;' they may be compelled to eat off *no plates at all*. Just as the wise men of Gotham raked in a pond to catch the moon—thus, at this time of day, we have Bourbon experimentalists raking to find the means of forcing the people to believe in their divine right to the government of France, Spain, or Naples, as the case may be. The jealousy of power watches, in Naples for instance, with so Vandal-like a severity over all the works of mind, that a high public functionary is known to have taken great umbrage at the name of *Galvanism*, thinking it synonymous with Calvinism; and another was filled with holy indignation because a poet had dared to give to *love* the proscribed epithet of *tyrant*. I think I shall go there; that is the place for improving one's morals! Let me hear from you at your best leisure, and believe me,

Yours ever and affectionately, BYRON.

LETTER XXXV.¹

TO SIR GODFREY WEBSTER.

Ravenna: April 25, 1820.

My dear W.,—Some find a home in their country; I find a country in my home. I like this place vastly; that is to say, its people. They are by far more natural in this remote part of Italy than the people of Venice—that cursed meddling race of Jack-an-apes. I wonder now how I could have staid so long at that place; or do our ideas change with a change of residence? Not unlikely. Taste is a chameleon, like truth, which changes as we change our clime, which changes with the century. The truth of a hundred years is not the truth of the present day, and yet it may have been as genuine. Truth at Rome is not the truth of London; and both of them differ from the truth of Constantinople. For my part, I believe everything. That, you will say, is practically prudent, if it be metaphysically possible. Well, believing everything, I am perhaps determined to be pleased with everything. What does your honour think of my philosophy?

¹ To Sir Godfrey Webster, Long's Hotel, Bond Street, London.—Ed.

Is it not quite equal to that of the Dutch—those souerkraut-eaters, who sit and smoke the whole evening, and, like the philosophers of old, *say little*, but, contrary to their practice, *think less*? Ravenna, you know, is classic ground. Though not very enthusiastic on the subject of antiquities, yet I confess that I trod the ground with a mixture of high admiration. The town itself, with its Roman monuments, is antique enough to throw an antiquary into decent ecstasies. Moreover, here are the remains of del divino Dante, perhaps Italy's only truly great poet, who applied his poetry to the vicissitudes of his own time, when Liberty was making her dying struggle against Tyranny, and descended to the tomb with the last heroes of the middle age. Sir Humphry Davy, the man of chemistry, is here, thanks to the gods! but few of his countrymen intrude upon the Ravennese. I like the *safety* man, for he is a *good* man. I salute you, and remain

Yours very sincerely,

N. BYRON.

LETTER XXXVI.¹

TO JOHN HANSON, ESQ.

Ravenna: August 28, 1821.

My dear Sir,—Your letter and enclosures reached me, unopened by the Austrians. Confound the business. I cannot help differing from the learned Doctor, as to the purport of his decision. The whole sum of his reasoning amounts to this, that there is precedent for the grievance. But is there any villany under the sun which precedent does not vindicate and attempt to sanction? The Doctor crows with his loudest note in referring to a pamphlet published in 1641, in the pure and regenerate age of the Commonwealth, in which the great delay of the Court of Chancery, and the enormous profits of the six clerks are bitterly complained of. But what of that? I might refer him to Colonel Pride's threat of making a military banner of the last gown of the last lawyer in Westminster Hall. I might refer him to a resolution of Cromwell's packed Parliament, for 'rooting up the Common Law of England, destroying the Court of Chancery, and reducing the whole judicial system to the Mosaic stan-

¹ To John Hanson, Esq., Chancery Lane, London.—ED.

dard.' But enough, such arguments are mere childishness.

I hardly know what to say, and I dare still less to hope. Like the devils in Milton's hell, we snatch the apples from the tree, but only to fill our mouths with soot and cinders. Let me hear from you soon, and believe me

Yours truly,

BYRON.

LETTER XXXVII.¹

TO CAPTAIN HAY.

Pisa: November 18, 1821.

Dear Hay,—By the Pope's toe! your letter is vastly amusing. From *respect* to the rank of the offenders, and from other *weighty considerations*, as the newspaper scribblers say, and *weighty* considerations they pocket now and then as rewards for their '*sins of omission*,' hardly anything of the luxuriant details appeared in the *chroniques scandaleux*. Does the 'Morning Post' grow too moral to hoot? In the first case you mention, Garth's lines are reversed:—

¹ To Captain Hay, Long's Hotel, Old Bond Street, London.—ED.

‘ Thus little villains oft submit to fate,
That great ones may enjoy the world in state.’

In the case of the Honourable Member, bad as it is, there was evidently no seduction. The whole of the *proven* conduct of the lady is direct enough to this point; and if a beautiful woman will ‘tempt a man to tempt her,’ it is true—we know very well what he *ought* to do; but ’tis a question whether he might not ‘find it necessary to borrow a little of some of Joseph Surface’s morality.’ Be this as it will, the crime, thus far, is not particularly aggravated; and with respect to the family of the criminal, though there be infidelity to the conjugal vow, there is no desertion; nor ought it to be forgotten in mitigation, that, even in the very height and infatuation of his passion, he resolutely refused to abandon the wife he had wronged, or relinquish the duties of a father; and the dissatisfied lady appears accordingly to have sought refuge in the arms of a more *constant* lover. There is room, therefore, for recrimination, and room for penalty; but it is certainly not a case for proscription, at least if we may appeal to former precedents of this high court of morality, the public press. My horses are waiting, and I

am compelled to conclude rather abruptly.
Believe me

Ever yours sincerely,
N. BYRON.

LETTER XXXVIII.

TO CAPTAIN HAY.

Genoa : September, 1822.

By Pope St. Gregory the Great! you are a shabby fellow; why dont you reply? What you said in your last letter is very amusing. I should like to know the sequel. *The* man is in this neighbourhood at present, and much troubled of late with the gout. When under a most agonising paroxysm in his ankle, he imagined his final dissolution was approaching, and, like Mr. Cayenne in the 'Annals of the Parish,' thinking it the duty of every loyal man in these times to die in a christian-like fashion, he became as devout as possible. But the twinge abated, and he is the old rogue again. Lives there that being with wit enough to keep him from putrefying, who doubts the rascality of the transaction? I suppose the woman is already like the Macedonian, sighing for new conquests. The primum mobile of the world now-a-days is *woman* and *cant*. Now, if you

are inclined to take a hint, try a little *physical* advice, should they persist in rejecting *moral* persuasion. I cannot make this a long letter, (lucky for you), for I am a good deal occupied to-day. Believe me

Yours ever and affectionately,

N. BYRON.

LETTER XXXIX.¹

TO MAJOR GORDON.

Pisa: March 20, 1822.

My dear Sir,—There is nothing against the immortality of the soul in ‘Cain’ that I recollect. I hold no such opinions as the parsons try to preach down peoples’ throats. They feel themselves called upon, by an imperious sense of duty, to denounce me ‘*as the greatest enemy of his species!*’ Very conscientious this, beyond all doubt! A little strong, however, on the side of charity. The scoundrels of priests who do more harm to religion than all the infidels that ever forgot their catechisms—words and opinions being of course more criminal than deeds!—else what would these

¹ To Major P. Gordon, Poste restante, Fiorenza. This town is sometimes styled Ferentino or Firenze. It is known now by the latter name.—ED.

pious men say of some of those who trample on nations, and sacrifice thousands, nay millions of their species to their own personal arrogance and ambition?—of those who feed their riot, pamper their appetite, and maintain their gorgeous osten[ta]tion by the pillage and oppression of half-starving multitudes? What of those who, in the security of their divans and cabinets, order rape and massacre and desolation to stalk abroad? What of the Turk (for I will not talk of the Moscovite), who condemns to indiscriminate slaughter all the Christian Greeks who, in siege and conflict, fall into their hands? What of those Christians, as they call themselves, who kidnap, purchase, or retain, in remorseless bonds, their sable brethren, and scourge, or order to be scourged, the poor miserable wretches whom they call their *property*, with a barbarity, in many instances, the very narrative of which makes the heart that hath one human fibre left in it shudder even to sickness and syncope? Does the Rev. Dr. never smell the blood of his poor sable brethren in the fumes of that morning and evening beverage which owes its savoury sweetness to their agonies? or never on such occasions ask himself, whether the inflictors and vindicators of these atrocities sin not against their species,

and against the God of mercy, almost as much as they could have done by the most '*impious*' line in all the poetry I ever wrote? 'Oh! but these people go to church and pray!' God of Mercy! do they pray to Thee? Am I to be stigmatised as a demon and infidel, because I made both Cain and the Devil state their own case, as the Devil and Cain would be likely to state it? But I have not the slightest inclination to defend myself against priests: they are indeed, whatever philosophy or whatever religion they may profess, the real *infidels*, for they are *faithless* to every trust of God and nature. Believe me

Ever yours sincerely,

BYRON.

LETTER XL.

TO MAJOR P. GORDON.

Pisa: September 1, 1822.

Dear Sir,—The book you sent me has been the cause of a good deal of merriment. Its author speaks rather too much in his own praise; he had better hear it from the mouths of other people; and in common prudence he should not demand that as a right, which is willingly conceded only as a favour. The

world is always much more ready to *give* than to *pay*—praise ; in fact it would fain be deemed liberal ; and there is no liberality in paying a demand, though there may be in the donation of what is not even solicited. I should like also to know whether the portrait in the second volume is the portrait of the facetious author ? If so, I hope it is not a likeness. Men, thriving by injustice and delusions, naturally hate those who expose their delinquencies ; and on this principle, I apprehend, the author will always be obnoxious to the Quarterlyers. One of the fraternity modestly informs us in one of the late numbers, that he ordinarily follows Apollo's favourite amusement, the sacrifice of asses, —Hone, Hunt, Hazlitt, and other '*beasts*.' If such be his occupation, one cannot help thinking he might be better employed, and the '*asses*' left to browse undisturbed, or at least to '*sacrifice*' themselves, as they assuredly would, did they belong to the long-eared genus he intimates. But I suspect he considers them a higher order of quadrupeds, and I have certainly heard that one of the alliterative '*triad*' might have been '*Apollo's*' colleague in the Quarterly, had not conscientious scruples about its principles deterred him from the engagement. It is my intention shortly to emigrate to Genoa—la

Superba—for which emigration there are several very potent reasons, amongst others, because your old acquaintance, the monkey, has got a dislike to the villanous company of this place. I still observe Prynne's 'manner of studie,' but instead of 'a pott of ale to refocillate the wasted spirits,' I use a French prescription—a bottle of claret, of which I promise you a share whenever you think proper to pay a visit to

Yours very truly,

BYRON.

LETTER XLI.¹

TO P. B. SHELLEY, ESQ.

Pisa: April 11, 1822.

My dear Shelley,—I send you the unpublished sonnet of Petrarch, of which the Countess Albrizzi gave me a copy:—

'Fiamma dal ciel su le tue treccie piova
Malvagia; che dal fiume e da le ghiande
Per l' altru' impoverir se ricca e grande;
Poi che di mal oprar tanto ti giova:
Nido di tradimenti; in cui si cova,

Quanto mal per lo mondo hoggi si spande;
Di vin serva, di letti, e di vivande;

¹ To Shelley, at the Villa Magni.—ED.

In cui lussuria fa l' ultima prova,
Per le camere tue fanciulle e vecchi.

Vanno trescando e Belzebub in mezzo.
Co' mantici e col fuoco e con gli specchi
Già non fosti nudrita in piume al vizzo ;
Ma nuda al vento e scalza fra li stecchi
Hor vivi sì, ch' a Dio ne venga il lezzo.'

If you can lay your hand on Guido Cavalcanti,
and will send him by Fletcher the learned, I
shall feel obliged. Believe me

Ever yours most affectionately,

BYRON.

LETTER XLII.

TO P. B. SHELLEY, ESQ.

April 24, 1822.

My dear Shelley,—I have reflected on what you said respecting poor Allegra. You are right. Pope somewhere mournfully exclaims, that the sun will shine as brightly, the fields be equally green, and all nature equally gay, the morning after his death as at that moment. Dr. Johnson sarcastically remarked, that however great the poet deceased, this was just as it should be. This joke is very well ; but where is the man of reflection to be found, who has not indulged in a soliloquy of this nature, when led to pause on

the idea of death, and the mysterious link which connects his own being with the universe? However, there is happiness in death, which to me has never appeared '*with terror fraught.*' It is my intention to send Allegra's remains to England for sepulture in Harrow Church, or near that tree in the churchyard where I once hoped to have laid my own. . . . Believe me

Ever yours very affectionately,

BYRON.

LETTER XLIII.

TO P. B. SHELLEY, ESQ.

Pisa: May 27, 1822.

Dear Shelley,—Such a plan of a drama would hardly admit the supposition of a consistent plot or narrative: if any expected it, they must have been their own deceivers. Thus much for the *Quarterlyers*. As to personal attacks from my old friends the *parsons*, I am so accustomed to them as to look at them only as a skirmish. If I do not go to church, I am a Christian for '*a' that.*' Prayers from the heart, I trust and hope, are as acceptable to God as those uttered in a cathedral. . . . Your *idea* is highly *poetical*. The Mahometan writers say that Azrael, though he was sure that Adam would rebel, executed the commission of creating him, which other angels had

declined, and for this reason was called the *Angel of Death*. They add, that the earth of which Adam was formed was carried to a place in Arabia, near Mecca; where, after having been prepared by the angels, the human form was given to it by God himself. The angel Eblis, afterwards the devil, being in dread of a superior, treated with contempt the materials of the human frame, which had been left to dry for forty days, or, according to some writers, for forty years. The Almighty, they say, animated the clay with an intelligent soul, and placed it in paradise; and, after it was so placed, Eve was formed out of the left side. Mahommed stated this paradise to be in the seventh heaven. When our parents were cast down from it, Adam is said to have fallen on the island of Serendib, or Ceylon, and Eve near Mecca. After having been separated two hundred years, the angel Gabriel united them on a mountain near Mecca, and then removed them to Ceylon, in which island the peopling of the world commenced. When shall I see you? Let us have no more eternities between our meetings.

Ever affectionately yours,

BYRON.

LETTER XLIV.

TO P. B. SHELLEY, ESQ.

Pisa: May 27, 1822.

My dear Shelley,—The man must have read those lines when he had snapped his fiddlestring. The charge of plagiarism is made without any foundation. Every observant man must have remarked how often the same thoughts, and even the same modes of expression, are used by persons who never were acquainted with each other. There is a celebrated sarcasm of Dr. Johnson's, which seems almost a copy from some lines by Joachim du Bellay; and yet it is very likely that the formidable lexicographer and moralist had never read, or entirely forgotten the works of the old French poet. In speaking of Lord Chesterfield, Johnson said, 'Sir! he may be a wit among lords, but he is only a lord among wits!' In 'Le Poet Courtisan,' by Du Bellay, who died in 1559, are the following lines:—

‘Bref, pour estre en cest art des premiers de
ton âge,
Si tu veux finement jouer ton personnage,
Entre les courtesans du sçavant tu feras,
Et entre les sçavans courtisan tu seras.’¹

¹ The old French is given literally.—ED.

If you can lay your hand on the other volumes, Fletcher the learned may take charge of them, without fear of becoming too great a philosopher while on his way home. Believe me

Ever yours sincerely,

BYRON.

LETTER XLV.¹

TO T. CURTIS, ESQ.

Pisa : May 25, 1822.

My dear Sir,—The verses you sent me yesterday are truly *elegant*, to use an Irish phrase. I recollect a similar epitaph. In the churchyard of a village called Risbrooke, in Rutlandshire, there is a large stone raised to the memory of a waggoner. On the top is a representation of a waggon and horses, a gate, a green hedge, and a waggoner; each side is decorated with implements of husbandry. After the age of the person, time of death, &c. &c., there are the following lines:—

‘ Here lies the body of Nathaniel Clark,
Who never did no harm in the light nor in the
dark ;

¹ To T. Curtis, Esq., then at Casa Vicelli, Pisa.—ED.

But in his blessed horses taken great delight,
And often travelled with them by day and by
night.'¹

Pray let me know your sublime intentions
and opinions, and believe me

Always yours,

N. BYRON.

LETTER XLVI.²

TO MAJOR STERLING.

Albano: Nov. 11, 1822.

My dear Sir,—The respectable Job says,
'Why should a *living man* complain? Some
Oxford logician might answer, 'Because a *dead
man* can't.' True and good reasoning; but I
would say because *swearing* affords a greater
relief, and *ecce signum!* '*merde!*'—a most
appropriate apostrophe of my respectable and
respected neighbours. The reading of the trash
has rather amused me; nay, it is spicy enough to

¹ This is an epitaph not unworthy of the age in which
this letter was supposed to be written. At Ilsley Church-
yard, Berkshire, the following was or is in existence:—

Here lies father and mother, and wife and I,
As plainly doth appear;
Only father and mother at West Ilsley,
And wife and I lie here.

² To Major Sterling, Casa Paulucci, Geneva.—Ed.

induce a Methodist parson to commit the sin of laughing at '*our neighbour*;' even the gravity of '*a turban'd Turk*' could not possibly resist an attack of cachinnation. Now all this, I suppose, is exceedingly sublime and beautiful; but I would wish to *understand* a little of the meaning of these fine metaphors—'a Muse wetting her adventurous brows with dews!' &c. Wetting her brows? Umph! To wash off the soil, perchance, of the dusty turnpike-road along which she had been travelling? 'With the dew of a holy *afflatus*!' An *afflatus*, in strictness, indeed, is a breath or a *breathing*; and breath may certainly settle into dew, but it must be tolerably long breathing that deposited dew enough for the Muse to wash her face in it. The word, however, in the English language is exclusively used to signify a supernatural inspiration; and to wet the brows with the dews of inspiration is a process we are not inspired enough to comprehend. But what are we to say of making a clean diaper of this same dew of the breath of inspiration—of wrapping up the soul in the purity of an *afflatus*? The '*opus*' shall be returned to you with the other books belonging to you. Believe me yours very truly,

NOEL BYRON.

LETTER XLVII.¹

TO S. BARFF, ESQ.

Messolunghi: April 5, 1824.

My dear Sir,—Dare those people regret the loss of a paltry thousand pounds bestowed on the Greeks? not sensible of the glory of having succoured an enslaved nation, but, with the craven spirit of beef-witted Falstaff, they scruple not to pick a quarrel with honour, because, forsooth! it feeds not at all. This argument, however, betrays rather the emptiness of their heads than their bodies; for what people but Jews could wish, in making a bargain, to possess both the goods and the money too? The glory was cheaply purchased. Should they have barely sold their birthright of glory, like Esau, for a pot of porridge (which they may want at the moment)? The '*ægi monumentum ære perennius*'² may be truly applied to your *great politician*, for he has left even so little æs or brass in the country to vie with his fame, that it ought to be gratefully given as a legacy to brighten the countenance of his more shame-

¹ To Samuel Barff, Esq., Zante.—ED.

² 'Tis marvellous Lord Byron should not have applied the first lines of the ode, preceding or succeeding, to himself.—ED.

faced descendants. I wish the honourable Committee would honour us with the long-expected *loan*. We want everything in this d——d place; but as I have already spent thirty thousand dollars upon the Greeks of the government and my own ragamuffins, I must take care of my piastres. We are all doing as well as we can, though most of us have suffered from fever. I shall be glad to hear of or from you. Believe me

Always yours, &c.

N. BYRON.

Can you procure for me three thick blankets? Captain Logothete will take charge of them.

B.

Here these remarkable letters end; and they are consigned, without further comment, into the reader's hands, for his amusement, his research, or the satisfaction of his curiosity.

RECOLLECTIONS OF LORD BYRON.

WE HAVE received the following interesting particulars from the carpenter who was in charge of Byron's corpse when on its way to England:—

TO H. S. SCHULTESS-YOUNG, ESQ.

6 Fenton Street, Dundee: April 3, 1872.

Sir,—In the year 1824 I was carpenter on board the Brig 'Florida,' Capt. George Hodgson. We left London with specie for the Greeks, who were then at war with the Turks.

On arriving at the Island of Zante we were told of Lord Byron's death, which had happened a few days before our arrival.

Our Brig being a smart, handy craft (being once a French privateer) was immediately engaged to convey his Lordship's body to England, along with five servants—viz. Mr. Fletcher, his chief body servant; His body guard, an Italian; Tito, His secretary, a Greek; His Doctor, an

Italian ; and His Groom, a Black called Benjamin.

We had also three Newfoundland Dogs, named 'Lion,' 'Gibraltar,' and 'Trafalgar.' The first was amazingly fond of the water, for on our voyage home we had to back the ship once or twice to bring him on board, after his having gone over the bulwarks.

We had a stormy passage home to the Thames, and arrived in June at the Buoy outside the London Dock, having our ensign half-mast high and Lord Byron's private flag also flying. Sir John Robb, M.P., and other gentlemen came on board to receive the body.

The shell containing the body was placed longitudinally in a cask seven feet long and four feet diam., and was filled with spirits.

The shell was made of rough deals about 2 inches thick, and lined with Tin inside, and perforated like a honey-comb to admit the spirits. Besides this shell, there was also a small black box, which I believe contained his Lordship's heart, &c., taken from Him.

I opened the Tin lid, and unrolled the raw cotton which wrapped the body, and it lay fully exposed to our sight.

The features were feminine, having neither beard, moustaches, or whiskers. The brow was

prominent and his hair of raven black seemed farther back on his forehead than the most of people, and a beautiful ringlet lay over his right Temple.

His face and skin were of a marble whiteness, his eyes very sunken, and one of his legs appeared to be about $\frac{1}{2}$ an inch higher than the other at the knee, which I believe arose from his deformed foot, although I did not see it, owing to the cotton covering it.

I saw the coffin which was to receive the Body; and it seemed to be a plain covered one, lined with pink silk inside. The lid was standing edge way on to me, and I did not observe whether there was a plate or not on it.

I then retired, and his friends put him in the Coffin, which was afterwards taken away by a City Barge which came alongside of our ship for that purpose.

We sold the Box, or shell, for six shillings to a waterman, for which act we were like to get into trouble, and our wages arrested by the Captain for it. The spirits were drawn off and thrown overboard. I gladly say what I know about the closing Scene of such an eventful life.

JOHN MILNE.

P.S.¹—On leaving Zante for England, we made an attempt to fire the minute Gun, but were so few in number that we failed, and made a complete bungle of the job. The sailors had no feelings, except of vexation, at being compelled to return so soon ; but if they expressed no reverence, they seemed to have no fear in carrying the dead body, and they did not shrink from their task, though every seaman will say there is no cargo in the world he so much detests as a corpse, a black cat, or a clergyman.

TO H. S. SCHULTESS-YOUNG, ESQ.

6 Fenton Street, Dundee : April 10, 1872.

Sir,—Mr. Fletcher held his tongue all the voyage, and didn't seem to care much about the trip, except when we supposed an Algerian pirate hove in sight. Dr. Brown, who came home with us, was an Italian ; he hardly knew any English, and constantly pestered me all through the voyage with a copy of an abridged Johnson in his hand, and an enquiry about the pronunciation of some word or other on his tongue.

¹ We have received some further communication from this writer, which, with alterations, we have added as a postscript.—ED.

The sailors wanted to drink the spirits that his Lordship was preserved in, and it has not seldom happened among drouthy tars, that they would even go the length of broaching the Admiral;¹ but this Dr. Brown effectually prevented by seriously giving out to all hands the liquid was deadly poison.

The cheeks of the corpse appeared very prominent, and the eyes were very sunken; the former perhaps by contrast, the latter by decay and the spirits. There was no appearance whatever of horns, but the skin was most lovely and smooth.

The dog 'Lion' on board was the dog that swam the Hellespont with his Lordship. Tito was the handsomest man I think I ever saw. He was very tall, certainly over six feet, had two cheeks like twin apples. He too knew little or no English, was excessively playful, constantly carrying the cabin-boy on his back; but Ben was the only one who could manage the dog.

The sailors said nothing about his Lordship, for they were very ill-pleased at coming so soon home to England, as they were expecting a trading voyage, which we got on our next

¹ With reference to the act of the sailors in drinking the spirits in which Lord Nelson's body was preserved.—ED.

run, when poor Captain Hodgson died. Our brig had no cargo, but a few (40) casks of currants to ballast her, and our stormy voyage is what sailors expect with a corpse on board.

Our cook was once cook to Lord Byron, and I have heard him say regarding his Lordship, that Lord Byron was a writer of plays, and that at the time the cook was with him, he was writing a play where a lady was to form a very prominent part—viz. in the chief act Lord Byron was to be just embracing a lady in a room, when Lady Byron was suddenly to come in, and then to say, ‘Am I in the way, Byron?’ and he was to answer, in a passion, ‘You are, damnably.’ This act, I thought, was the answer as to his separation from Lady Byron.

I would very much like to know if Captain Hodgson’s widow is still alive, for I remember well of her husband, our captain.

JOHN MILNE.

We are indebted to the Rev. W. H. Thompson, D.D., Master of Trinity College, Cambridge, for the following letters ; the information contained in which cannot be better imparted than verbatim :

TO H. S. SCHULTESS-YOUNG, ESQ.

Trinity Lodge, Cambridge: April 20, 1872.

Dear Sir, * * * With the exception of one or two notices of Byron—not altogether creditable to his character, which I have heard from Professor Sedgwick, the only anecdote it occurs to me to mention is one which I heard from the late Master of Magdalen College in this University, the Hon. and Rev. George Neville Grenville, also Dean of Windsor, who was a nobleman of Trinity at the same time with Lord Byron. He told me that on a day in the Easter Term, when a concert of some importance was to take place (I think) in the Town Hall, Lord Byron invited a party to wine in his rooms in our Neville's Court, on the understanding that they were to adjourn to the concert after the wine party. Mr. Neville (as he then was called) had not before that been a guest of his Lordship. On entering his 'keeping' room, as it is here called, Lord Byron was not there to receive him, but his valet came out of the inner apartment with a stick of lighted sandal-wood, with which he carefully fumigated the apartment. This done, his Lordship emerged from his inner room, and welcomed his friend courteously. The party went

off very well, and at the appointed time, about 6 P.M. if I remember, 'Hall' being then fixed at 2, the whole party set off for the evening entertainment. The way lay along 'Trinity Lane,' a narrow and in those days probably not over clean thoroughfare. As the flagged causeway was then as now only wide enough for one, Mr. Neville naturally endeavoured to fall behind his host, wishing him to lead the procession. This act of courtesy, Lord B. took very much amiss. He turned round, and with a 'dark fierce' look exclaimed, 'You are like the rest of them! you want to spy out my deformity'—alluding of course to his club foot, which would be visible to one walking behind him.

This story, which was much better told by the Dean—who had a talent for such recitals, seemed to me interesting as illustrating Lord B.'s coxcombry, and also his morbid self-consciousness, two qualities ingrained it seems in his nature.

I did not understand that this occurrence led to any permanent coldness between the parties to it—for though impulsive and passionate, Byron does not seem to have borne malice. The stories told in some collections of his college life are in great measure fabulous. E.g. he was believed to have kept a bear *in college*—and

we even pretended to know the turret in which the brute lived. A bear he did keep, but its den was not in College, but in the yard of the Rose Hotel, then standing between Trinity Street and the Market Place. He did, I believe, say, that he intended Bruin to be a candidate for a fellowship—no doubt a reflection, probably not undeserved, on the manners of some of the then existing Society. Among them he particularly disliked Porson, I believe. One of my Lord's favourite associates was Jackson the prize fighter, whose manners he loudly praised: and whom he used to drive about in a gig or tandem.

On the whole Byron does not seem to have been liked by the Undergraduates, though he formed two or three ardent friendships, as with Hobhouse and Mather. His statue by Thorwaldson was offered to the College by Sir J. Hobhouse—afterwards (?) Lord Broughton—(I am not sure about the date of his peerage) soon after the accession of Dr. Whewell in 1841, and by us accepted very thankfully. It is now an ornament of our Library, after having lain many years in the Cellars of the Custom House in London, as the Dean and Chapter of Westminster refused it admission into the Abbey. It is on the whole fortunate that this was so, as

it is on a smaller scale than most of the full length figures at Westminster, and perhaps in a too severely classical style to harmonise with the surrounding monuments. The Countess Guiccioli, who visited Cambridge not many years ago, is reported to have pronounced the likeness very good.

If you find you can make any use of this gossip in your forthcoming work, there is no reason why you should not do so. I only wish I had more to tell, but other stories told by undergraduates when I was one myself have too much of the mythical stamp upon them to deserve publication.

The only surviving contemporary of Byron in the University is the venerable Prof. Sedgwick.

I remain, dear sir,

Faithfully yours,

W. H. THOMPSON.

TO H. S. SCHULTESS-YOUNG, ESQ.

Trinity Lodge, Cambridge: April 23, 1872.

Dear Sir,—The other anecdotes to which I alluded are with one exception devoid of proper authority, and it would be wrong, I think,

to publish the mere wine party gossip of Undergraduates—who in Mr. Grote's phrase are a 'mythic-poetic race,' or were so in my time.

Lord B. was a great swimmer, as is well known. A favourite, or once favourite, bathing place at Trumpington, about two miles and a half from Cambridge, retains the name of 'Byron's Pool.'

The most creditable of the attested stories is that to which I have already alluded. When he came up to vote for Dr. Clark as Prof. of Anatomy, the Undergraduates loudly cheered him. This took him apparently by surprise, for after he left the Senate-House, he was seen leaning against the rails of the enclosure and weeping profusely.

I am, dear sir,

Yours faithfully,

W. H. THOMPSON.

We regret that none of Lord Byron's letters, &c., addressed to Mrs. Thérèse Black, the Maid of Athens, who still evinces much of her former beauty, are now in existence. Mrs. Black, who has resided, she informs us, at Athens since the death of her husband, the British Vice-Consul, writes thus :—

À MONSIEUR SCHULTESS-YOUNG.

Athènes, 11 juin 1872.

* * * * *

Vous me demandez des informations de Lord Byron, mais je regrette beaucoup que je ne puis pas vous en donner, car les personnes qui pouvoient nous donner des exactes informations n'existent plus.

Lord Byron a été à Athènes avant l'indépendance grecque ; pendant la guerre nous sommes partis d'Athènes pour sauver la vie, sans rien prendre avec nous, car nous n'avions pas le temps, ainsi nous avons abandonné tous nos effets, et malheureusement, tous ont été brûlés par les Turques, ainsi avec nos effets ont été brûlés tous nos papiers.

Veuillez agréer les sentiments de ma plus haute considération.

THÉRÈSE BLACK.

À MONSIEUR SCHULTESS-YOUNG.

Athènes, 24 juillet 1872.

* * * * *

Puisque donc vous avez la bonté de demander la permission de dédier à moi votre livre, je ne puis qu'accepter avec plaisir votre offrande, avec mes plus vifs remercements.

. THÉRÈSE B.

CONCLUSION.



READER, we have come to the end. Is there anything in this book that you can cherish as a hope or a recollection? Take it—it was written to you. Or is there a phrase which recalls one feeling or thought not to be forgotten? They are of the past, but the future is at hand. Do we please your fancy or your curiosity?—we have done what we intended; and if a word seem as of your own soul, we feel then drawn to you, and leave our prejudices on their page. Our thoughts run through this book, which you will take up, and again lay down, but while you read, remember, that like the tree with the reluctant boughs, you brood both over green grass and withered leaves, to keep one fresh and the others unforgotten.

On this day nearly half a century ago Lord Byron died. Whether that moment which gave light to others was to him eternal happiness or an eternal night, it is an instant of undying

recollection or a wavering hope. We must not punish ; we cannot reward, nor take away the monopoly of Heaven ; but with an impartial judgment all may review the character of all. Byron was unfortunate in his life, but he possessed those qualities without which none can be admired. A liar, even upon crutches, is not an object of pity, but a poet without natural affection had only been an object of disgust. Byron could not give up his desire of fame for the love of virtue, yet was consistent in the basis of his conduct in attaining or condemning either. It is only a man of earnest and sincere principles who will dare avow a change in them ;—for the line of life is sometimes a circle—and Lord Byron, if his sentiments ever varied, did not hesitate to make his new emotions known.

There is much not seen in the heart of any man, in spite of his insignificance, and we look in vain for the virtue of his character to philosophy or faith. No doubt Byron was at times a miserable man, of cold sympathies and unnatural ways, for he had learnt or made no creed : and there is a happy glow in Belief, and the keen and polished chill of Death is in incredulity, though a faith be never formed for the sceptic, nor a philosophy for the people.

When a long time has gone by without a revealing of character, it is necessary to deduce an initiative one; and though Lord Byron do not to some seem waiting loyally for the behests of the Supreme, silent and conscious of no omissions, but free from all selfish aims and self-willed desires, we may learn something from the philosophy and religion of his life, and pity his belief while we hold faster to our own. For it is possible, as we have heard suggested, that Lord Byron, in the expected realisation of an ideal judgment-day, may be found amongst those who cry wonderingly, 'Lord! When saw we thee an hungered and gave thee meat, or thirsty and gave thee drink, or sick and in prison and visited thee?' And the Universal shall answer through and with them that He is All:

'Insomuch as ye have done it to the least of these my *kinsmen*—

'*Ye have done it unto me.*'

Sentiment, though sometimes false, and always to English minds distasteful, had its due influence on Lord Byron's character, and we must consider it with care. The strong affection, of brief growth it may have been, for her who never returned his love, is not a matter for common sympathy or insight. Yet it is very

certain, after his warm aspirations, ideal hopes, his sincere love and unuttered vows, that the cold reaction on his heart was deadly to his nature and a poison to his life. It was thus: She whom he loved had given her affections away from him; nor was he ignorant when not yet too late. Had she been less kind, or less heartless, he might have come safely from the trial; but with tender hands and loving glances, and pitying, soft-spoken words, she wrapped the toils around him in thought and carefulness. Was it well? But we naturally condemn him, and excuse her; we admire her *constancy* to another, and her chastisement of his presumption. It seems to us (we speak individually) that the punishment was just. Yet what rewarded her but the smiles of the blind goddess, or the blinder god; or of all the deities which the imagination or cupidity of men have created? We must imagine (let him who can) that from a summit of happiness and security he felt himself hurrying—till he came with one leap to lower than he was before—a withered flower or leaf his only recompence; the satisfaction of a self-forgetting sincerity, the remembrance of happiest moments, by one regretted, or the lookings for a future, undetermined and unknown—the realisation of his hopes; and a

feeling of folly withal. Had they but waited awhile, how different had been the life of both; but the quick and final rejection of a passion deep, hasty, and abundant, bred but misery and remorse, while Folly followed after with the memories.

The disappointed love of youth, the hard and contemptible rules of Conventionalities, the admiration of women, the development of the proud and sensitive nature, and the condemnation of the country he loved best, were the marks in his career which can be understood. But who shall tell the sentiments or inspirations which were little known? or what can be gained in noticing his character with useless warnings or hypocritical regrets? None have done what we have tried to do, and in these pages manifested with deliberation, but what we have omitted will, we hope, be not forgotten; and if we have said too much or too boldly, we plead that Lord Byron's memory may not be harmed.

Let him be known from boyhood of a brave genius, innate or developed, a man of noble passions, kindness, and vices; the poet of sublimity, the genius of the bathos; the satirist, the lover; the sensualist, the stoic; the flattered, the calumniated; the sceptic, the religious; the philosopher,

the child—so lived Byron; and in manhood, when his goodness was appearing, in the wars of Liberty he died: his latest known thoughts those of a father, a husband, and a brother, and his glance towards death as firm as a philosopher's. We cannot do better than close this book with his final words: 'Sleep,' said the dying man; 'I must sleep now.'

And into the hands of the public it is given, and to those of the god of Circumstances.

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